

[AYRES] them at these big annual Republican meetings. In 1957 I had over a hundred Republican women, my workers, who were coming to town. Each year I seemed to have to upstage myself to do something different for them. You know, you can only tour the Capitol so many times, and a lot of these people had made the trips several times before. And in 1954 Secretary [George M.] Humphrey of the Treasury, and [President Dwight D.] Eisenhower, were gung-ho on blocking the Democratic tax proposal to increase the exemptions from, I believe it was from \$600 to \$750. Of course, how things change. Now the Republicans are all for them. But at that time, it would be inflationary and everything else, and it was very, very bad. Well, I had taken a position for the exemption, a public decision, and the vote was going to be awfully close. And Thruston Morton, who then was assistant secretary of state in charge of congressional liaison, had been assigned by the White House to get my vote. And Thruston knew me well enough, and I knew him, that he wasn't going to put it on that basis. He said, "Well, just let Ayres know that everybody down here's a little unhappy with his position and let him figure this out for himself. If he can do it, he will, but he's already way out on the limb." He said, "There's a newspaper column written about Ayres, saying that the mink coat wearers get the tax breaks, that the cloth-coat wearers don't, and so forth and so on, and it was pretty natural, and I felt very strong about it--couldn't understand why Humphrey and Eisenhower had taken this position for a lousy \$150 exemption.

I had gotten a call, oh, about a week or so before-- and I think Thruston Morton may have suggested this--from Eisenhower. And when the call came in, it really shook up the office. We had a few jesters around and thought it might be one of them, but it wasn't. And the president came on the phone--I had gotten to know him fairly well, had quite a session with him back in '53 on the McCarthy thing which Henry Cabot Lodge wrote up in his book--I forgot the name of the book--in which I advised him to take on McCarthy. We had some other discussions. I had asked for a five-minute appointment and wound up staying forty minutes, Eisenhower going over my ten points and [James] Haggerty coming in and saying, "You're late, Mr. President," and he's saying to Haggerty, "Let me alone. What Ayres is saying is all right." And so to get the call was all right. I could see why he was calling me, although it didn't happen every day. So he said, "Ayres, I understand your position on the tax bill and I realize how tough that district is out there." He said, "After all, you ran ahead of me there." Somebody had briefed him on the vote and analysis. "But," he said, "if there is any way--don't want you to hurt yourself. We need you

[AYRES] back here. But if there's any way at all you can help us out, because it is awfully close, I'm told." Well, the president calls a comparatively freshman member of Congress and says, "Look, my program-rests on maybe what you do," and Morton had said, "You may take six or eight votes with you, Bill, because it will give the other guys an excuse--'Well, I've got a tough district like Ayres,' and 'Don't bother me with your problems.'"

I gave it a lot of thought--"How do I get off the hook on this?" I thought, "Well, this thing's been up in the Congress before." So I had my staff check out when it had last been debated. Well, it was in the 80th Congress when the Republicans were for what they were now against. And the great opposition speaker to doing what they now wanted to do was Sam Rayburn, who was the majority leader, and I couldn't believe my eyes when I read in the Record what Rayburn had said, that this was all politics. And it was a devastating argument for the position that the Republicans were now taking. So I stayed up half the night preparing an extemporaneous--which would appear to be extemporaneous--speech with all the facts and figures, the records from the 80th Congress, Rayburn, and so forth and so on. And I went to Charlie Halleck and said, "Charlie, I would like five minutes on the rule." He said, "Bill, you've got your nerve." He said, "Here you're against us and you want five minutes, and we've only got thirty minutes to state our position." I said, "No, Charlie. I'm on your side now." "You're on our side, Bill? How much time do you want? Will five . . . take ten, take ten. [Chuckle.] Oh, you take the ten minutes."

Well, actually my speech could go over ten minutes, but it didn't have to. But I had enough to really cover it constructively. So I took the floor, and a lot of the people who knew what my position was, didn't know that I had changed it. So I gave the speech. And I said that during the time I had been in the Congress--a short time, since I was in my second term--the one gentleman that I had really learned to respect and admire, and whose judgment I could always count on, was the majority leader, former Speaker Sam Rayburn. And in attempting to do the right thing for my country, I reviewed the remarks of Mr. Rayburn when this issue was last before the Congress.

MORRISSEY: Was he sitting up in the chair?

AYRES: No, no. He was majority leader then. Martin was the Speaker.

MORRISSEY: I was wondering if you could see him . . .

AYRES: Oh, I could see him. I think he knew what was coming because we got to be very good friends over the years. In fact, he was the greatest Speaker, I think, we ever had because he understood the situations. And I said to him, "On such and such a date, the majority leader, the former Speaker," had this to say. And it was devastating. And I said, "Up until I learned what he had said, I had taken this position," and I stated my position. I said that there's one thing that I had taken with me into these halls, which was a few little words from my father when I left to go to college. He said to me, "Bill, as you start out on life's journey, there are three things I want you to remember. If you think you're right, fight. If you think you're wrong, wait. If you know you're wrong, admit it." And, I said, "Mr. Rayburn, I'm here today to admit that I was wrong. I should have read your speech before I took a position. This is all politics, as you said. It doesn't make any difference to the economy of this country, as you said. But I hadn't understood all this until I read your speech, and now I'm here to announce that I'm going to agree with what your position was during the 80th Congress, Mr. Rayburn, and I shall vote for President Eisenhower's position." Well, a lot of the fellows said that made the difference because it just took the steam out of anything they said from then on.

MORRISSEY: Did Rayburn ever reply?

AYRES: Oh, no. He couldn't . . .

MORRISSEY: Did he comment informally to you?

AYRES: Oh, yeah, informally. He finally said, "How did you find that? Where did you dig that up?" He said, "You made a lot of sense in that," he said, "but times have changed a little." You know how he talked. Well, that established me pretty well with the White House group and my Republican women were coming to town, and I figured, "Well, they owe me one." So I got hold of Sherm Adams, who had called me and thanked me, and Humphrey called me and thanked me, and Humphrey wrote me a letter and the president wrote me a letter. Morton wrote me a letter. I was a hero for quoting a Democrat. That's what it amounted to.

So, I asked them if Mrs. Eisenhower couldn't receive my women who were coming down, and by golly, they arranged it, let them all go through the line, and Mamie was just as gracious as she could be. Oveta Culp Hobby received . . .

[END SIDE 1, TAPE III
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE III]

[AYRES] So then the next big occasion for the women to come was after the '56 election in the spring of '57, and how are you going to upstage being received by two secretaries of the cabinet and the president's wife? The women were all so thrilled at that that the next time they were coming they all wanted to come, so I had over a hundred of them. What was I going to do with them? I thought, "Well, maybe I can get one of the NATO country embassies, that will be interested from a public relations point of view, to give my ladies a reception. So I called several of them and got a real cold shoulder. "Oh, I can't be bothered with that," you know.

Well, at that time, Menshikov, who was known as "Smiling Mike," was ambassador of Russia. I thought, "Well, the NATO countries have turned me down. We want better relations with Russia--supposedly--we're talking about it, anyway. And Menshikov is making moves and going to receptions for the first time." You know, you don't dare speak to the Russians without having the FBI follow you, so I called the Russian Embassy, told them who I was and what I wanted. They sent not only their press man, but Menshikov, up to my office. There again, so there wouldn't be any misunderstanding, I pulled out the tape recorder and Menshikov and myself had an interview as to what the ground rules were. He was very impressed with that, so there wouldn't be any misunderstanding. The women were to come, there was to be no press, they would give the reception, they would have the right to show their film to the women afterwards, and their second in command would be available to answer questions. Fine.

The crowd of women, when I announced what they were going to get, were very pleased. My women weren't as gung-ho anti-communist as some of the right-wing people in Ohio were, including Catherine Kennedy Brown, who was a national committeewoman. When she heard about this, it was just unbelievable that you would talk to Russians. What has happened to Bill Ayres? Has he gone crazy? Well, the word got out through the Russian Embassy, of course, that this group of Republican women from the Middle West were going to be entertained at a reception at the Russian Embassy. Never been heard of. So, the Russians in turn told the press that reporters couldn't come unless I okayed it, because we had an agreement. The Russians were very fair about it. So I got a call from AP and I got a call from UP and I got a call from every society editor in the East saying, "Is this true? We're told that it's closed to the press." I said, "That's right. The Russian Embassy and I have agreed on it." They said, "Well, the Russians OK'd it over there."

[AYRES] Balinoff, their press man, "said it's all right with them if it's all right with you." I said, "He said that? Well, let me check it out." So I did. He said, "Yes, but we're not going to change it if you don't say so. But we see no reason why we should be accused of doing something behind closed doors, and since we're doing it, why not let the people know we're doing it?" So I said, "If it's all right with you, it's all right with me," never realizing that it would make such big news.

Well, they put on quite a reception and there were as many press people as there were my hundred women. They were all over the place. And the Russians put on a great spread, caviar, cognac, and the works. I mean it was really something. And in the question period, I had to get into it to steer this Russian--"Oh, yeah, they have free elections. Well, who decides who's going to be on the ballot?" "Well, we decide," he said.

And my Republican girls weren't being taken in, but the press was taking pictures of my girls taking pictures and it was just like an old-fashioned hoedown. In fact, it got so out of hand that that night, when we had my dinner, I had to unbrainwash them because some of these quotes I could see that the press were getting. We had a PR gal from home who was very good, from one of the department stores there, and they asked her what she thought of Menchikov and her quote was, "He's a living doll." Well, I could see what that was going to do with some of my right-wing Republican women in Ohio, not in our district, but Catherine Kennedy Brown, that group. Well, the word spread, because my girls were all saying what a great time it was. But then in that next Sunday edition of the [Washington] Star, it was the front page of the Society Section about the Russian Embassy entertaining all these women, and stories were written all over about it. But that was a first time occurrence . . . if the Democrats had done it, it wouldn't have been nearly as much news. It was sort of like, back then, like Nixon going to China.

Well, as it turned out, I got a call from Nixon. He'd seen the story and thought it was just great, and he wanted to know all about that. He called me over and I gave him a half-hour briefing on how it all came about. He was very, very interested. I got a little criticism from some of the colleagues who saw the story. But as I explained to them, "These women are the ones who do the work for me and I have to do something different for them each time. And if we're ever going to have relationships with Russians, I can't see any better place to do it than at the embassy level. And since Menchikov is being received by so-and-so, sort of quietly, I figured, 'Let's

[AYRES] do it in the open.'" So there was another thing like the Life story. And then there was a story with Nixon prior to the '52 election, after his Checkers speech. He came out to Canton, Ohio, and I had, again, a tape-recording of this, of his endorsement of me and my saying to him what a great job he did on television.

MORRISSEY: Was this right after the Checkers speech?

AYRES: Yes.

MORRISSEY: Within a day or two?

AYRES: Yes.

MORRISSEY: Because I remember he flew into West Virginia . . .

AYRES: Yes, and then he came to Canton.

MORRISSEY: Then he came from there to Canton?

AYRES: And Pat Hillings was traveling with him and I had an old battery tape recorder that I had borrowed from the radio station because I knew I'd have to do it fast and I knew I wouldn't have any place to plug anything in. I still have that record that I had put on the wax. It was quite an interview, about a two-minute interview with Nixon on the back of the train. As the train's pulling out, I'm jumping off.

MORRISSEY: What were your feelings before the Checkers speech when you knew he was coming to Canton, when the national buildup was occurring about whether or not this guy should get off the ticket?

AYRES: I was arguing that he absolutely should not.

MORRISSEY: Get off the ticket?

AYRES: Yes. Should not get off the ticket. And took the position that not only was he a good man, but his fund was misunderstood. And, of course, I was being a little brave, too, because from my polls and my own intuition, with Huber's cry-baby act, I knew I was in. Nixon didn't have any bearing on it, on my vote. But there weren't too many people who were, you know, saying he did a good job on the TV show, which I thought he did. It was my style, something I approved of, you know, drag the dog and the coat in. [Chuckle.] Most of the politicians would have done the same thing if they could have gotten away with it, personality-wise . . . because

[AYRES] actually the funds that he had at that time compared to what the senators do nowadays, it was pretty mild, pretty mild.

MORRISSEY: When you first got to know Nixon in '51, did you sense that he did have his eyes set on the vice-presidency, the presidency beyond that?

AYRES: Oh, yes.

MORRISSEY: He wasn't happy being a senator from California?

AYRES: Well, you could just see that he was just full of ambition, and the one thing that hasn't been brought out in any of the books on Nixon is the basic curiosity of Nixon.

MORRISSEY: You know, I was surprised when you said that, because I don't remember anyone commenting on that as a trait.

AYRES: Oh, I think it's more than a trait; I think it's a motivation with him, and I think his recent desire to travel now is as much curiosity as anything else-- "What's going on there?" I think in back of the China trip, aside from the international situation and the impact that might make, he's a very, very curious person. It's what makes him tick, just like his calling me on the Life story, his calling me on the Russian story, his interest in the taping of my price-control meeting. He's curious. An intelligent person, with a curiosity that is controlled, can be a very influential person, because a curious person usually gets to the bottom line.

MORRISSEY: I read both of Henry Cabot Lodge's books but I can't remember anything about your meeting with Eisenhower about McCarthyism.

AYRES: No, he didn't mention the meeting that I had with Eisenhower. He mentioned to Eisenhower the meeting he had had with me in Akron. When Lodge was U.N. ambassador, he came out to Akron to U.N. Day, or whatever the occasion was--I think it was U.N. Day--to address a group at the Jewish Center there. They were honoring Mrs. Wendell Willkie, and during the course of my meeting with Henry, after my remarks, Jack Knight was there and Lausche was there. We had a little session--we were having a drink, something down in his suite, he had invited us down--I don't recall all the details. But I mentioned to Lodge that, if he had the opportunity to tell the president, I was willing to take the stump to expose this McCarthy. I said he was a real

[AYRES] phoney and was being built way out of proportion and that he should be taken on, and that the president ought to take him on. But to let the president know that there were those from Democratic districts that I felt were willing to, and I had spoken out that this was ridiculous for the country to get all upset over this one senator going off half-cocked, in my judgment. And that's what Lodge wrote in his book. So when I asked for the appointment with Eisenhower, I had no problem getting it. I think that probably had some bearing on it because when I told him I wanted to talk about the '54 elections coming up and some of the important issues, including McCarthy, that's what I put into my statement for the meeting. And it was during the meeting that I talked about McCarthy, but Lodge mentioned that he mentioned to Eisenhower my support for his taking a stand on McCarthy.

MORRISSEY: I see.

AYRES: That's what was in Lodge's book. I didn't know it was in Lodge's book until a couple of years ago when my son was vacationing down in Jamaica and one of the fellows who had gone on the trip with them down there-- or one of the girls, I don't know who all they took--was reading this book and came upon a quote and ran over to Frank and said, "Is your dad Bill Ayres?" Said, "By God. Well, lookie here." So he sent me the book for me to autograph to him, the kid who had been reading the book. And that's the first I knew about it.

Then I saw Henry at the Marshall dinner.

MORRISSEY: That dinner, yes, last spring.

AYRES: Yes, and he chatted with me about it, and he said, "If they had just listened to us," because he was very gung-ho, you know, to get Eisenhower out front, which Eisenhower never did, as you recall.

MORRISSEY: Well, how did Ike listen to you?

AYRES: Very, very intent questions, very non-committal.

MORRISSEY: Anybody else in the room?

AYRES: No. I had been advised to prepare everything on one sheet, and I had my ten points on the sheet. A couple of things he was really impressed with were that he wasn't going to win the '54 congressional elections by talking about a balanced budget, and the other thing, not to be too concerned about the veterans' benefits except for the disabled, to come out strong for that. And that's

[AYRES] one thing that impressed him. The McCarthy thing he was very reluctant to pursue and said, "Well," as I recall--should have had my tape recorder there--as I recall he said something along the lines, "Well, I think this is something the Senate should handle. I don't think that I should get into it yet."

MORRISSEY: Well, that's what happened.

AYRES: But it was a very interesting forty minutes.

MORRISSEY: Did you have other meetings with Eisenhower?

AYRES: That was the only private meeting. We had other meetings where there were other groups there, but he was always very much aware, after the original meeting in '53, of my presence. He knew who I was, and then after his phone call of '54, and after the tax bill and after Mamie receiving the girls--I never wore out my welcome with the staff down there asking for other things, although I was always able to get my people on White House tours.

MORRISSEY: All the time you were in Congress, were you still running the heating company?

AYRES: No, I sold the heating company, which turned out to be a real problem. I didn't get that much money for it. I probably would have been better off to have dissolved it and given the customer list to a reliable dealer, because the people who took it over played on the name and didn't keep up the good name that I had established. I tried to protect myself by keeping two shares of stock so I'd have some influence as to what was going on, but that wasn't enough. I started getting letters from people saying, "We bought the furnace on the basis of your fine reputation, but these people are doing this and doing that." Then I started getting calls from the Better Business Bureau and so I met with these fellows and threatened to run ads dissociating myself in all ways and giving them the two shares of stock so I could say I had no part of this and "I would suggest that you check with the Better Business Bureau; I'm sorry." They, in turn, sold it to another party which cleaned it up and then I sold them the stock. Now another company has bought out the corporation. In fact, the fellow who bought it was the fellow who used to be my bookkeeper and learned the business, so it's all right now. Of course, now it wouldn't make any difference anyway.

MORRISSEY: My impression is that with so many lawyers in Congress there are very few people with a background like your own, coming home from the war,

[MORRISSEY] starting your own business, building it up, being truly a small businessman.

AYRES: Well, I think that's true. You can never say what a man's motivations are for running for Congress. My observation was that a lot of the lawyers ran because they couldn't advertise and it was a good way to get established and to get known, because they seemed to gravitate to the legislatures, and then from the legislatures into the Congress--very, very able gentlemen. But I do think perhaps it would be a little better balanced if we had more diversification.

MORRISSEY: Of all the people we're interviewing on this project, I cannot think of another person whom I would describe as a small businessman.

AYRES: No, I don't think you have very many,

MORRISSEY: And there weren't many among your colleagues.

AYRES: No, no. I don't think you have . . . well, Chuck Brownson was a small businessman. He ran a paint and wallpaper company, I think, out in Indianapolis. But I don't think you would find very many who started the business themselves, that were truly small businessmen. I think you have some businessmen who were businessmen because they've inherited a business . . .

MORRISSEY: That's different.

AYRES: . . . that was in the family, yes, or they have invested in a business. They may be a lawyer who invested in a small business. No, I didn't find anyone with a background like . . . in fact, John Allen, former member from California, mentioned one time in the Chowder and Marching group that he guessed he and I were the only two in the group that had ever worked with their hands, really, for a living. John had been a construction man at one time. But the rest of them were all either lawyers or newspaper people.

MORRISSEY: I take it back. I just thought of Hastings Keith who was running an insurance agency in Brockton, Mass.

AYRES: That's true.

MORRISSEY: So there are some exceptions. Does one feel at a disadvantage if one's in Congress without being a lawyer by training?

AYRES: No. I thought it was an advantage because a lawyer's not supposed to make a mistake, but a non-lawyer can. And, of course, counsel is very cheap and I think probably I had the best lawyer in Charlie Radcliffe on the Education and Labor Committee in the field of education, and Mike Bernstein whom I'd gotten over from the Senate from Taft. I had a much better staff--with all due respect to Adam Clayton Powell's staff--Adam relied on my staff for the facts, because Adam was forced to take on some people for patronage purposes that were able but not nearly as sharp or as well informed or as experienced as the two counsels that I had . . . because Radcliffe and Bernstein, they were just tops. Mike is now retired and Charlie is still on the staff of the Education Committee, and still relied on very much by Carl Perkins to know what's going on. Of course, now, thanks to the appropriations that they have, they've got all sorts of staff lawyers.

MORRISSEY: Why did you decide to stay in the Washington area when you left Congress?

AYRES: Two reasons. One, I had just, in 1969, purchased a little summer place down on Chesapeake Bay, a place where we'd been going ever since the children were young in the summertime when the family would come down here, which I enjoyed very much.

Number two, I had sold my business in Akron, and had I gone back there, I would have still been looked on as the congressman and called on to do an awful lot of things that I really wasn't interested in doing without having the authority to do it. And then when Nixon offered me this position with Jobs for Veterans, something that was very intriguing to me, it was logical to stay in Washington.

In the meantime, we had no home in Akron; we had sold it. We lived in an apartment, and had a home here in Bethesda which we like very much. And, of course, I had no roots in Akron. I'd only been there eight years when I ran for Congress. I had moved to Akron in '41, and started talking about running for Congress in '49, so Akron wasn't like a hometown. I hadn't gone to school there. If I'd had a flourishing business, it would have been a different situation. But we really like this part of the country.

MORRISSEY: Your situation is quite common to a lot of congressmen. As the years go by, your family is here, because Congress has become almost a year-round activity, and in your case, your real home was here, you had a summer

[MORRISSEY] home here. But does that hurt a congressman back in the district? Is there talk about, "Well, he's 'gone Washington' on us. He's not really in touch with the district anymore"?

AYRES: I think it makes a difference, as I said previously. I think that group of young people that Seiberling had going door to door, you know, "When's the last time you saw Bill?" "Did you read about the article where he was at a big Washington party?", you know, that sort of thing, has an impact.

MORRISSEY: Right.

AYRES: In fact, I think here just recently they used that against a fellow out in Oklahoma who was defeated. What's his name--Risenhoover. Took one little column out of a paper--which you can blow up at home. Yes, I think it makes a difference.

MORRISSEY: And yet you were going back constantly, weren't you, to the district?

AYRES: Well, I hadn't been going back as much in '70--in '69 and '70--because there wasn't any family back there, and my wife didn't like to make the trip every week, and it gets so unless there is an important meeting to attend or something, you are inclined to sort of forget about . . . "Well, I don't have to go this week." I think that happens.

MORRISSEY: You came to Washington as a young man and had a young family. What toll does a congressional career take on a person's family?

AYRES: Well, I think that depends entirely on the stability of the wife. Fortunately for my wife, due to the nature of my being in the technical sales field of plumbing and heating, an awful lot of my work had to be done in the evenings when the people were at home. And starting from the first time that I was with a chain store, managing the plumbing and heating department, she wasn't used to having me there to help with the dishes every night. Therefore, although the children were young--the youngest was six and the oldest one twelve when I first ran, they had spent a lot more time with their mother, putting them to bed and that sort of thing, than they had with me. So the fact that I was there during that period every weekend, and that my wife's coming down here for special occasions was sort of a treat for her to get away and leave them with the babysitter, meant that it wasn't as much of a change as it would have been if I had

[AYRES] primarily had a job from nine to five and had been there every evening. I was there to mow the yard and trim the shrubs and take care of the emergencies. So it really wasn't that much of a problem because there wasn't that severe a change all at once. But then as soon as the children were all out of school except the one daughter who was a junior in high school, and we were able to put her here in a school which she liked very much in Washington, Holton Arms, it was really not too great an adjustment.

But I can see where if the wife is not very, very stable, it can be a problem. If they come from a safe district, which we didn't, of course, then they can pack up and move to Washington lock, stock and barrel, bring the family, put them in school here and make this their home for all intents and purposes and then let the husband go back there on the weekends. And if it's a safe district, he doesn't have to go back as often.

But in our situation, I had a very stable wife. We met as freshmen in college at the freshman mixer, when we were sixteen. Although we didn't go steady in college--I had to work and didn't have time--we remained friends until my senior year when I was pretty well established. I was working in a flower shop with a fellow that I had met, who since has become a multimillionaire, who came down from Detroit with \$13 in his pocket. He was going to sell flowers on the street and he had the gall to put an ad on the bulletin board over at the college, which he was only a couple of blocks from, saying, "Wanted. College student to share an apartment and work in small business." He had no small business. He didn't have the rent for the apartment. And I answered it, and that's how I met Lou Brunswick, which has turned out to be a very wonderful relationship. So by the time I was a senior, he had a big flower shop and I had a good job. And all the girls at the dormitory were very fond of Mary Helen, my wife, because I could take over all the used flowers every morning. [Laughter.] So, we've known each other for a long time, so there was no problem.

MORRISSEY: I'm running out of tape on that note.

[END SIDE 2, TAPE III]

Session II--September 21, 1978

[SESSION SIDE 1, TAPE IV]

MORRISSEY: Let's start with the issue of expanding the Rules Committee in early 1961. The key question I have in mind is why were you one of the twenty-two Republicans to vote for it?

AYRES: I was being consistent in my vote, because the first vote I cast in the Congress, in the 82nd Congress in January of 1951, was a vote that would have continued the rule of the 81st Congress, which was known as the twenty-one day rule. That had been defeated. Although I was one of the few Republicans voting for it, I did feel at that time, from the research that I had done--and I wasn't too familiar, when I was elected, with the operations of the Congress, but being advised, this vote was coming up I did as much studying on it as I possibly could within about a twenty-four hour period--and it seemed to me that it was logical to continue the rules of the 81st Congress which took some of the power away from the Rules Committee. At that time it was made up of eight Democrats and four Republicans. My research soon showed me that that didn't mean anything because the four southern Democrats on the Rules Committee were voting with the four Republicans, so legislation was being blocked on a coalition basis rather than on a party line, and it appeared as though the party in power should have the right to bring out the legislation that it wanted, good or bad, and take the responsibility--either getting credit or getting the blame.

Then when President Kennedy was elected and Speaker Rayburn was going to work very closely with him--although President Kennedy, when he was a senator, and I had had a few differences, I did feel that he was right in asking the Speaker to enlarge the Rules Committee which would have removed this coalition bloc which had existed from 1951 up through 1960. So I still maintained the same position and voted to enlarge the committee and I presume that vote, although I didn't realize it at the time, probably did me a lot of good politically, indirectly, because it pleased Speaker Rayburn no end and there were a few little favors along the way that the Speaker could do for me that he was very cooperative on, remembering that I had cast the vote that was helpful to his side. Also, John McCormack was very grateful. Of course, some of my colleagues on the Republican side weren't so pleased, although I did have a little company. I think there were twenty or twenty-one of us.

MORRISSEY: Twenty-one others, plus yourself, and the measure carried 217 to 212. So I would say it was very important for the Democratic coalition to make inroads into the Republican position on that.

AYRES: Well, I felt the issue was whether or not the majority party had a right to get its legislation out-- and the Democrats controlled the Congress, and there was a Democratic president. Let them stand or fall on their program. And I should not be an obstructionist.

MORRISSEY: I would think that the hard part of that would have been notwithstanding the appeals of your fellows in the Republican party.

AYRES: Yes, it was rather difficult. I recall at the time that Charles Halleck was very unhappy. Charlie had been out to my district in 1956 and had been the keynote speaker at my rally, and he felt that I sort of owed him one, but I still felt that the principle involved was far greater than the political implications from sticking with your party and making it a solid vote.

MORRISSEY: Did the twenty-two Republicans who voted for expansion on the Rules Committee organize or communicate with each other in any formal or systematic way? Did you know who the other twenty-one were?

AYRES: No, I didn't have any idea. I might have suspected a few that would be voting that way, but there wasn't any organized effort to rally support for the enlargement of the Rules Committee. In fact, I think we were all being very quiet about it because we didn't want to alienate our own party. You do feel a little guilty, so to speak, when you deviate from the party position.

MORRISSEY: I assume that the Democrats were cultivating this small number of Republicans rather diligently.

AYRES: They weren't too open about it. They did approach us, but I got my position known very early in the game as to what I was going to do so I didn't get the pressure from either side, so to speak, as much as I would have if I'd said, "Well, I'm undecided." There's an old saying in politics, somewhat like driving a car, as my daughter said, that if you stay in the middle you get hit from both sides, so it's better to get on one side or the other.

MORRISSEY: I've heard other congressmen say that sometimes it simplifies life to say early in a legislative issue which side you're on and people then will leave you alone. As you say, if you don't, then you'll be besieged.

AYRES: Well, they leave you alone, but then they alert the lobbyists and campaign supporters, financial supporters, and turn them loose on you, and you do get a lot of pressure, but you're only getting it from one side; you're not getting it from both sides.

MORRISSEY: The other alternative I've heard is simply not to say how you're going to vote, which is not the same thing as saying you're undecided.

AYRES: Well, I would assume that, in the political arena, that would be construed that you are undecided. However, you could say that you don't know because you want to get them off your back. But I think it's much better to take your position early and let it be known and then if you do see some reason that you've been wrong in your decision, until the time the roll is called, you can always change.

MORRISSEY: You mentioned Charles Halleck. There are two moments in Republican leadership that interest me, the first being when Halleck took on Joe Martin and defeated him, and the second when Gerald Ford took on Charles Halleck. What do you recall of each of those?

AYRES: Joe Martin wrote a book after he was defeated in which he was very upset because of my vote for Halleck. Joe mentioned that he had let me use his limousine to bring some people in from the airport and he had gotten a policeman a job at my request. Well, that in itself was quite a story. Joe Martin, at that time, was the minority leader and I had a disabled veteran from home, Ralph Scalzo. In fact, he's still on the police force now, he's a lieutenant. Ralph Scalzo came to me and wanted a job. He'd just gotten out of the service and he was from Akron and came from a very large Italian family, and I had been close to the Italian people. Most of them were Democrats but a lot of them supported me, so I was able to get Ralph a job in the folding room. Joe Martin did help, but a fellow by the name of Tom Kennamer, who was the Doorkeeper, was really in charge of the folding-room employees. So I told Tom that I had this disabled veteran and I'd like to get him a job. Tom said, "Well, we'll put him on down in the folding room." So I think he started down there, I don't know, maybe \$2.00 an hour. But Ralph liked the job and he did a good job.

[AYRES] Well, then, when the Congress changed control after the 1954 elections, Ralph was discharged from his job because it was a patronage job and Fishbait Miller and his crew took over. Ralph came to me almost with tears in his eyes, so upset that he had lost his job. I said, "Well, what do you mean you've lost it?" And he said, "Well, they just told me I was through." And I said, "Who took your job?" He had worked himself up to a sort of a leadership position in the folding room, and he said, "A fellow by the name of Maragon, used to work with Truman." Well, that rang a bell. Maragon was the fellow who had been involved in and gone to jail because of the five-percent operations at the White House under the Truman administration. I thought, "Well, how unfair. Here's a fellow who served his country in time of war. He's now disabled, he's gotten a very mediocre job in the folding room and he's getting pushed out by an ex-convict for political reasons. I realize ex-convicts have to be rehabilitated, but I didn't think they had to be rehabilitated at the expense of a disabled veteran.

So I immediately got Ralph in front of the television cameras in a news conference and all hell broke loose, and the press picked it up immediately because Maragon was newsworthy. His having been out of prison just a few months and then being put on the payroll of the Congress, and a disabled veteran being pushed out, it caught on. So Speaker Rayburn got a hold of Joe Martin and said, apparently, "Listen, this is bad. This is hurting the Congress, and what's it going to take to shut this guy Ayres up?" So then Joe Martin called me in and he said, "What's this all about? The Speaker's upset." And I said to Joe Martin, "The Speaker ought to be upset." He said, "What happened?" and I repeated the story to him. He said, "Well, we're going to get five policemen for the minority. Could your man be a policeman?" I said, "Well, of course. He handled a gun in the war and he's physically able. His disability isn't such that he couldn't be a good policeman." He said, "Okay. We'll make him a policeman." So that's how Lieutenant Scalzo, who's a senior member on the police force, Capitol Police Force, got his job.

Well, Joe Martin thought that because he'd done that I should have supported him when the Halleck fight came up. But I had told Charlie Halleck prior to his announcing that he was going to be a candidate, that he should run for the job because although Joe Martin was as fine a man as you'd ever want to meet, like a lot of us who get up in years, eventually time is going to catch up with us and it definitely had caught up with Joe. Well, all of the major negotiations for important legislation in the House were handled by Halleck. He was sort of floundering

[AYRES] because when he had become the majority leader--in the 83rd Congress--he lost his committee assignments, and he really hadn't regained them since he was the majority leader back in the 80th Congress. But he was doing all of the work and getting none of the credit and really not having the authority to do a lot of what he was doing because he just picked up what Martin should have been doing. I told him that he ought to run for it and I would support him, and I thought some of the younger members would also. I had gotten to know Halleck very well during the negotiations on the Ladrum-Griffin bill in which he played a very integral part, but still he really had no title. He was sort of a floor leader, handling the debates and carrying the ball for the Eisenhower administration. So when he announced that he was going to challenge Joe, I had no problem supporting him, not on the basis that I didn't like Mr. Martin, but that Halleck was the better man for the job.

So then when the time came that Halleck was going to be challenged, I felt it was only fair that I stick with Halleck. In fact, Tom Curtis had called a meeting after the '64 election when the Republicans, I believe, were down to 140 members and Goldwater had taken a beating for the presidency. Tom supposedly was calling the meeting to see what 140 Republicans could do to get a little strength in the House and how close we could be and so forth. But what was in the back of his mind was getting Halleck out of there. I could see the handwriting on the wall and told him, "Charlie," I said, "Now, look. This meeting that Curtis is having in December, that's just the beginning of a campaign, of a campaign for somebody else." Well, at that time, several people were interested in it. I know very well that Mel Laird was interested and, of course, Jerry Ford, and there might have been others in the wings. But Halleck didn't take it very seriously. He said, "Oh, no," and he started going through the record of the things he had done and so forth, and he had been very effective as the leading member of the minority though having so few troops.

But then Ford launched his campaign, and I recall I got a call from him--because I announced early that I was for Halleck--but I got a call from Ford--I think he was vacationing down in the islands with Rogers Morton--I don't recall exactly where the call came from--but anyway, he said, "I understand, Bill, that you're supporting Halleck. How can you do that? Here we're old buddies, we're members of Chowder and Marching, our families are friends," and so forth. And I said, "I don't see any reason why we should dump Charlie this way." And I said, "If you want to get rid of Charlie, I think those of you who are interested should have sat down with him and

[AYRES] met with him and said, 'Look, this is what we're going to do. We don't want to embarrass you in any way in front of your district,' and so forth and so on, 'but we're going to make the run and maybe you'd just like to bow out.'" But it wasn't done that way, so I supported Halleck. As I recall, the vote was pretty close, two or three votes difference. I think that probably, although Ford and I had been very close and we had been friends for a long time, I think probably my telling him point-blank, rather than having all of the indecision, caused Ford to appreciate it. I don't think he would have appreciated it had he lost by one, but he won and he knew where his friend Bill Ayres stood. I think this because afterwards, he said, "It would have been a lot simpler if a lot of the fellows that said they were for me had really been for me . . ."

MORRISSEY: Oh, really?

AYRES: Their nose count showed they were going to win by at least a dozen votes, and when the vote was taken, it was much closer. In fact, they had to have a recount, as I recall, because when they counted the votes, there was one more vote cast than there were voters eligible to vote. So they had to have another vote.

MORRISSEY: Now how do you suppose that happened?

AYRES: Well, in the Congress, the internal elections were run so haphazardly . . . they passed out a little slip of paper, and there could have been two sheets of paper sort of stuck together. A fellow could have voted and then turned it over and said, "Well, my gosh, I didn't vote," and then cast his vote. I don't think it was anything deliberate, but it could have been. You talk about rigging an election. The way those little slips were passed out, you could have cut up your own little slips and really made it difficult.

MORRISSEY: Why do you suppose Ford wanted that job?

AYRES: Well, he had had a taste of a little leadership by being chairman of the House Republican Conference Committee. He enjoyed being a leader. That was evident in the biographies that have now been written about him, even back to the time when he was playing center for the University of Michigan. He wanted to be the center of things and he felt that here was the chance. And had he not moved at that point, Mel Laird was right on his heels.

And, of course, when he moved up to being the minority leader, then Laird became chairman of the conference. Ford might have lost his opportunity to ever advance in the Republican structure.

MORRISSEY: Jerry Ford came in a term before you did, and Melvin Laird came in a term after.

AYRES: Yes.

MORRISSEY: Did you ever think of running for leadership positions?

AYRES: No, no. All through my twenty years I had to more or less play down the Republicanism in my district. The ranking member on the Education and Labor Committee was about as high as I dared get and still represent a labor district. Had I become part of the Republican leadership, not only would labor have done even more--they did enough as it was to try to beat me--but I would have been the target. It would have been very, very difficult to remain in Congress and hold any position of that type, because I noticed the pressure increased after I became the minority leader of the Education and Labor Committee.

MORRISSEY: You mentioned a moment ago that Speaker Rayburn was able to throw some favors your way after the vote on the expansion of the Rules Committee in '61. Exactly what type of favors could a Speaker do for a member of the opposing party?

AYRES: He could give his cooperation in getting a bill to the floor, getting the Rules Committee to clear it for you, or at least add his support to it. He was very nice in meeting with important constituents I had who came to town who were quite impressed that I could take them in to meet the Speaker. The fact that he knew me so well and would say some kind words was helpful. Although he didn't control what the Democrats could do against you, he could, through channels, let it be known that, well, they're not going to do anything too rough on you. But the fact that you get along with the Speaker and he is friendly with you . . . I presume the biggest thing that he could do would be not to be too difficult toward your legislative proposals.

MORRISSEY: You mentioned Ralph Scalzo, and that causes me to ask about the fellow you got a job as a page who was black.

AYRES: Yes. Jimmy Johnson. That was a very interesting situation. My inclination was to always have the pages selected on some sort of a merit system rather than the patronage system. In fact, this first came up when the page that had Democratic patronage who was from Akron when I was first elected was going to be removed from the page rolls, which meant he had to leave the page school.

[AYRES] And he was in his senior year and I thought, "Well, this is terrible." That was my first interest in the page school. I went to our leadership at that time, and I believe there again, that it was Joe Martin that I went to--either Joe Martin or Charlie Halleck--and said, "Something ought to be done about this, because here's a young man who's in the upper ten percent of his class, but is going to get thrown out because a Republican came into the Congress and now he's lost his patronage." They made an exception, and in fact, I have something that I treasure very highly. This page's grandfather made a beautiful walnut gavel--he was a cabinet builder--and it has a plaque on it "from Congressman Ayres' first page." It's a very nice thing to have as a remembrance of him.

Well, then the Jimmy Johnson situation came up. He was from Chicago and I had no connection with his people. He wasn't a constituent of mine--but a story appeared in the paper that Barrett O'Hara had promised this Jimmy Johnson, black boy, that he could be a page. Then when he got down in the Congress, he found out that Carl Vinson of Georgia was chairman of the patronage committee that determined who was going to get pages, and they discovered that Jimmy Johnson was black. Apparently someone decided, whether it was Congressman Vinson or some of the others--the southerners did have a lot of control at that time--that in no way was Jimmy Johnson going to be a page. Barrett O'Hara was embarrassed, but the committee didn't care about that; Barrett was way over on the liberal side. When Jimmy was denied the right to come to the page school, this made news because little did the Democrats know that Jimmy's aunt, Ethel Payne, was very active in, I believe it was the Chicago Defender, a black newspaper. She was the Washington representative for it, and she made quite an issue of it.

My daughter, who at that time was at the age where she was just beginning to follow the news a bit, saw in the paper that Jimmy Johnson had been promised he could be a page--and then the Congress had said, "No, you can't." And she made the comment to me, "Daddy, is the Congress starting to kick kids around now, too?" I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "Well, look at this." And I read the story and I thought, "Well, this is dirty pool." So I got into the act and I called Ethel Payne. She was a big Democrat, it turned out, which I was not aware of at the time. When I called her up to ask about this, she, I think, was a little dubious as to why a Republican from Ohio should be taking an interest in her nephew from Chicago. I explained to her that I thought it was unfair, and that I was willing to pursue it. So she came up to the office and she arranged for me to meet him. He was a fine young fellow, and I could tell that he was really

[AYRES] sincere about wanting to go to page school. I guessed it could have meant a good deal for him because he had supervision here with his aunt here in Washington. Well, I didn't get very far in getting him to be a page, because I had no patronage and no one was taking an interest in it. I couldn't get Adam Clayton Powell interested in it. He said, "No, the cards are just stacked against you, Bill. There's no point. . . I can't help," and so forth and so on, "but the time will come when there will be black pages."

So I got a newspaperman, a fellow named Robert Hoyt, and explained to him what the situation was and I said, "Now, Bob, if you've got any time, do a little digging on this. Find out why we've never had a black page." Well, during the process of his investigation and my own digging in, we discovered that there isn't any such thing as page boys, as such. They are actually on the legislative payroll, and the way the law read, as I recall, anyone on the legislative payroll between the ages of fourteen and eighteen can attend the page school. Well, there was my chance, so I put Jimmy on as a clerk. . . .

[END SIDE 1, TAPE IV
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE IV]

[AYRES] Jimmy worked with the secretaries in the office and they liked him. In fact, they made sort of a -- not that I would ever put him in that position--but they did make sort of an errand boy of him, and any of the filing they didn't want to do, why Jimmy would come over after page school and work. Well, this made great news. "Jimmy Johnson gets in the page school." They didn't dare deny him the right to go. He was between the ages of fourteen and eighteen and he was on a legislative payroll. So Jimmy got into the page school and did very, very well. And after he got all this publicity, then everybody and his brother wanted to get into the act. Jimmy Roosevelt said, "I'll take a piece of the action." Martha Griffiths, from Michigan, said she was going to take a piece of the action. So it relieved me. It gave me a little more money for my budget. So I said, "Fine. Anybody wants in the action . . ." So I think at one time Jimmy was flitting between five offices because he was on five different payrolls. That probably was one of the things that prompted the Congress to change the rules that now an employee cannot be on more than one congressional payroll.

But Jimmy graduated near the top of his class, did very well. I haven't heard from him lately, but he went on to medical school and he came back after he was in school and brought his bride with him. He came from a

[AYRES] very nice family. As I recall, his father was a minister in Chicago. And it didn't hurt me at all politically because Ethel Payne was very high in the AFL-CIO circles and she sort of let it be known, "Well, this fellow isn't all bad. He may be a Republican; maybe he doesn't vote with us all the time, but he did something for the blacks," and of course, this was way back before any civil rights legislation or anything was on the books. But it was an out-and-out discriminatory thing that some of the diehard southerners didn't want a black boy running around there on the floor. And Jimmy didn't abuse that privilege. Occasionally he'd come over to pick up a paper, or I'd call him and he'd come over and get a bill and take it over for me or something like that. But he didn't stand around with the pages because he wasn't actually a page. He was a legislative clerk.

MORRISSEY: So, in effect, you caused the page school to be integrated?

AYRES: That's exactly right. Of course, now they have girls who are pages and so it's completely integrated now. I think at that time, however, the school itself did have some black pages in the court. I'm not certain of that. But Jimmy was the first one who came over from the legislative payroll. The law may read "legislative or judicial." I don't think Jimmy was the lone black; there may have been one other one. But he didn't have a whole lot of company.

MORRISSEY: Let me go back again to early 1961 when the Kitchin-Ayres substitute to the Kennedy administration's minimum wage bill came up and got passed.

AYRES: Well, I felt very deeply that the federal government should stay out of the minimum wage business where interstate commerce was not involved, and the law up to that time, of course, didn't apply to intra-state commerce. I also felt that if they ever started limiting the coverage of the minimum wage on the basis of dollar volume, it didn't make any difference what figure you started at, even if it was a million dollars of business that the enterprise had to do, because it would eventually get down to where everything would be covered. Well, it's taken less than fifteen years to accomplish that. Now the minimum wage bill covers intra-state, interstate, the works, so to speak. So I figured that the only way you could get a bill passed to offset what the Democrats were trying to do was to have a bill that would cover just the interstate operations where a corporation was operating two or more operations, which was directed primarily at the chain stores. I went over this in quite some detail

[AYRES] with Charlie Halleck and he agreed that we might stand a chance on it. Well, there wasn't anyone on the Education and Labor Committee that I could get on the Democratic side to co-sponsor it, because it was too soon after the Landrum-Griffin bill to come along with Landrum on it again. So we set out to find some Democrat who would co-sponsor the bill and Paul Kitchin from North Carolina agreed to do so. Of course, we had been all through the minimum wage legislation in the 1960s. It was then that I had my controversy with Senator Kennedy, stating that he wanted . . .

MORRISSEY: You mean the 1950s?

AYRES: Yes, in the 1950s and 1960. He wanted an issue rather than the bill.

He had just been elected president and this was the first major piece of legislation that he had come up with. James Roosevelt of California was handling the legislation for the Democrats. So we got a lot of support from the business community because they realized that the minute we started out with the dollar volume, although the mom and pop store wasn't going to be hit right then, eventually they would be. Also, each year the minimum wage would be going up and there would be a lot of communities that just couldn't afford to pay the minimum wage, although it sounded very minimal at the time.

We didn't get a whole lot of organized support against the bill because they figured that with the Democratic Congress and President Kennedy being for it, and with Roosevelt leading the troops we just didn't stand too much of a chance. I frankly didn't think we did either, but at that time we didn't have the recorded teller votes, and it was a matter of who you could get to the floor as to whether or not your amendment passed. So we didn't make any big hullabaloo about it. We just offered the amendment, the Kitchin-Ayres Amendment, as a substitute to the administration's bill, and we had our troops there. We were well-organized. I think I had every vote that we could possibly get on the floor; and Jimmy Roosevelt, who was a good friend, was sort of kidding me about it, "Well, this is your day to go down in defeat, Bill." But as the people started coming through on the teller vote, Jimmy was trying to slow things up to get the word out to have them take their time so he could get his troops there, because at one time, I think, we were about ten ahead. The way the teller votes count, each side counts its members as they walk between the tellers. When I had counted, as I recall, to about 170, Roosevelt was getting very, very nervous. And there was a delay. He was telling his fellows, "Hold

[AYRES] back. Give our boys a chance to get in here." He didn't realize that we already had all of ours there. Well, they couldn't stall it any longer and when we got up to the last one that he could get through--and I was watching very carefully to see that no one came through twice--we won it, I believe it was just by one vote, on the teller vote, and everybody was really shaken, particularly Kennedy. I understood that Kennedy called afterwards and really chewed them out--"Of all the people for us to get beat by on our first major legislation--Bill Ayres." Well, I knew very well it wasn't going to hold up because the conference [committee], of which Kitchin was not a member, was so stacked that they would just railroad it right through. On a record vote, which we have on the conference report, we would stand no chance, which we didn't. But I think, as Tom Wicker wrote in his book on the first ninety days, or a hundred days of the Kennedy administration, that this alerted them that they better be very well organized and have their troops on the floor on future bills. But the conference report butted right through and now, of course, any amendments to the minimum wage are just amendments for the amount of money because everybody's covered. They even expanded it later on to domestics and everyone.

MORRISSEY: You were a member of that conference committee, weren't you?

AYRES: Yes.

MORRISSEY: And you wrote a minority report?

AYRES: Yes.

MORRISSEY: The dynamics of conference committees have always been unclear, largely because, as you well know, at that time they didn't document their negotiation, the process of negotiation.

AYRES: No, but you could foresee what would happen, with the way the Congress was made up. Of course, the conference is in the same proportion as the membership of the House and Senate. It was very apparent when we were in the conference with the House having the Kitchin-Ayres bill and the Senate having what had been the House bill as amended by the Kitchin-Ayres, that we were going to be just wiped out on the first vote in the straight party-line vote. I recall that I had given Charlie Goodell, who at that time was in the House and was on the conference--later became the senator from New York--but I had given Charlie a lot of leeway on this bill. He had done his homework. Charlie was a very able fellow, and in the conference he

[AYRES] really got upset because he was comparatively new in the Congress and he was really disturbed at the way we got railroaded. He gave quite a little spiel in the conference. It would have been good to have had that recorded because it was right to the point and it took a new man with a lot of energy and courage, without too much political knowledge, to say what he did. He really told the senators off, and he told Adam Clayton Powell, the chairman, how terrible this was that the House was being sold down the river. I let Charlie give his speech and then said, "Very good, Charlie, but it won't change the vote." [Laughter.]

MORRISSEY: Are there certain skills a congressman can bring to negotiation in a conference committee? Turn that question around: why do some people succeed and some people lose?

AYRES: Well, most conferences are pretty well decided ahead of time by the . . .

MORRISSEY: . . . by the membership?

AYRES: . . . if there is a matter of real difference of personal opinion or parochial interests. I think in current times we've seen that happen here in the last few months in 1978 with the energy bill and the various divisions that haven't followed party lines but have followed parochial lines. Well, in the minimum wage bill, something of that nature, it was more along party lines.

MORRISSEY: Let me go back to your previous encounter with the then Senator Kennedy before he was president, on this question of the minimum wage. This would have been, what, '58 or '9?

AYRES: That was in 1960.

MORRISSEY: Oh, that late?

AYRES: We had the conference on the minimum wage bill prior to the Kitchin-Ayres bill. When the Kitchin-Ayres bill was introduced in 1961, we had not amended the minimum wage bill because it did not get out of conference. The conference deadlocked. And Senator Kennedy was chairman of the conference and he had made quite an issue in his campaign seeking the presidency, of how this minimum wage bill should be changed and all people should be covered and so forth, and how terrible it was that some people weren't making any more money than they were, and it was a campaign issue with him. So we had gone back to conference

[AYRES] after he had been nominated. The conference didn't amount to a whole lot because we discussed a few things and then Senator Kennedy announced, "Well, it's very apparent that we cannot come to any agreement, and we'll just adjourn the conference and report back to the House and Senate that we are in disagreement." And then he went out to the press where the cameras were set up and announced what had gone on. It was somewhat factual, but not completely accurate. And after he had finished his comments, I stepped up in front of the cameras and started to say that "This isn't exactly what happened. It was very apparent from the very first hour that we met that Senator Kennedy was not looking for a minimum wage bill, but he was looking for an issue in his campaign to be president. That's why this conference is breaking up."

Well, the press didn't pay too much attention to me and Kennedy walked down the corridor towards the Senate with a couple of aides, and we were standing there sort of saying to the press, "Well, I guess you've got to be a candidate for president to get any attention around here," and Kennedy turned and came back and grabbed me by the arm and walked in the Old Supreme Court Chamber where the conference was being held and he really started to lecture me, "Don't you ever do that to me again. I was holding that press conference. You had no right to do that," and so forth and so on. I couldn't believe it. I was taken back. I just kept my cool and I said, "Senator, you aren't president yet. But if you act like this as president, God help the country." And he just walked away. And his aides grabbed him. They motioned to the press to stay back. He sort of had the press under control at that time, and they did stay back. After he left, some of the press came in and said, "What was going on over there? He was mad, wasn't he?" and I tried to be . . . I didn't want to go into all the details because I was really taken back and I said, "Oh, he just sort of chewed me out for some of my comments. He'll get over it," and let it go at that. The only printing I ever saw of it was a story in the New York Times. I think Marjorie Hunter wrote something like "Kennedy cornered Ayres after the conference, but Ayres said he chewed him out."

But Kennedy never forgot it. It was interesting--while he was president because he kept talking about the depression that was going to be forthcoming, and I had occasion to be giving a speech in Florida right at the time he was talking about the depression that was around the corner if Congress didn't follow his plan. So in my remarks in Florida, I said that if Kennedy kept talking about the depression, he could talk us into one. Apparently he didn't realize that nothing happens in this country until somebody sells something. That's what makes the economy go.

[AYRES] And I said, "Not that he doesn't take an interest in his little Carolyn, but he just doesn't have the time. For instance, why doesn't he go out and buy her a tricycle and let it be known that he has bought her a tricycle, so we can increase the sales of tricycles all over the world, for that matter." I said, "In fact, the first time I have occasion to go to the White House--I don't want to embarrass the president--but I'm going to take Carolyn a tricycle."

Well, about a month afterwards, there was some invitation for all the congressmen to come down, so I called the Hecht Company and said, "How long will it take you to get a tricycle for a three or four-year-old up to my office?" and they said, "Oh, we can do it pretty quickly." So they sent a tricycle up and we took it down to the White House.

Well, Mrs. Kennedy was just furious because they had planned that evening that Carolyn was going to be down there too, sort of mingling with Mrs. Kennedy and the president. I thought, "Well, this will be a natural. This will really jar Kennedy," because having had two little girls of my own, I knew ... and if she didn't have a tricycle, what the reaction was going to be. She could care less about photographers being there when she saw that tricycle. And I could just picture myself putting her on it and showing her how to ride it [laughter], so Mrs. Kennedy passed the word up--as I understood from a friend in the Secret Service--"Don't let Carolyn come down. Don't bring her down." They had her all dressed up in her little pinafore and so forth. So she didn't come down, and I had alerted the press that I was going to be there and what I intended to do. So, Carolyn didn't come down and the tricycle was there in the lobby of the White House, up near the main dining room where the little reception was being held for these members of Congress who were there. The press said, "Well, what are you going to do? Take it back?" I said, "Oh, no. I'll leave it here." And then I sat on the tricycle to show them it was a good, well-built machine, and they took a picture of that, and that got out the story that I had taken the tricycle and mentioned that Kennedy should have taken the time out to get his little girl a tricycle because "nothing happened until somebody sold something." I learned from Larry O'Brien that the president sort of got a kick out of it to a degree, but Mrs. Kennedy did not think it was at all funny, some commoner bringing her little girl a tricycle. [Laughter.]

But, you know, it was interesting, that thing got an awful lot of play and I got some nice letters from the tricycle industry thanking me, because I think they had the

[AYRES] biggest year up to that time in the [laughter] sales of tricycles. In fact, one outfit, I think down in Tennessee, came out with a Carolyn name on their tricycle. I had no ulterior motive, but I did discover later that the tires were made in Akron.

MORRISSEY: I was wondering if it was manufactured in your own district.

AYRES: Just the tires; just the rubber, by a small company there, labor group.

MORRISSEY: Since we're talking about the Kennedy-Ayres relationship, is there more to embroider on the theme? And I do want to talk about Landrum-Griffin.

AYRES: No. Kennedy did his best, I guess it was in '62 . . . he was a great help--tried to be a great help--to my opponent, Oliver Ocasek. They had arranged for him to make a commercial, an advertisement, for my opponent, and this was rather interesting. He was in Cleveland and he had his picture taken with Oliver Ocasek, and then they got Kennedy in the room there to make up this one-minute endorsement of Oliver. They were going to saturate the radio waves with it. I don't know who goofed on it but it certainly amused me and I had a lot of fun with it because it said, "And I want you to know that the congressman from the Fourteenth Congressional District of Ohio should be Oliver Ocasek. Oliver Ocasek, now your state senator, will be a great help to me, and I will appreciate your vote for Oliver Ocasek." [He had mispronounced the name.] Well, they couldn't use it, so my friend at the radio station finally came in and said, "They came over to edit this thing. Listen to it. You'll get a kick out of this." So then I exposed this whole story in my campaign, how phoney endorsements really were; that Kennedy didn't know my opponent; he didn't even know how to pronounce his name, and if you have any questions about it, ask him why they cancelled the commercial. [Laughter.]

MORRISSEY: Did Kennedy visit your district at all?

AYRES: No. Cleveland was as close as he came. They brought in all the big names. Akron and Cleveland joined districts, but he didn't come in. His lieutenants did, but he didn't come in personally.

MORRISSEY: Let's go back to Landrum-Griffin and how Landrum got into the picture.

* Kennedy put the accent on the first syllable instead of the properly accented second syllable. [Ed.]

AYRES: Well, at that time, in 1959, the Education and Labor Committee was chaired by Graham Barden, and Phil Landrum was a comparatively junior member. Well, after the Senate investigations of the labor racketeering had come out, it was very apparent that something had to be done in the way of labor reform, and President Eisenhower was very, very much interested, in fact, insisted, that the administration have a position on a strong labor reform bill.

Well, Kennedy, Senator Kennedy, was the chairman of the Public Welfare Committee of the Senate, and they had gotten a mild bill through the Senate which labor really wasn't too much opposed to because they realized that with the Hoffa difficulties and what the McLellan committee had come up with, the public would just not tolerate there not being something, even though it might have been superficial. On the surface they had to appear to have done something in the field of labor reform. Well, we couldn't get any substitute bill in the Senate, so after the Senate bill had been passed, and the House bill had been introduced, which was almost identical to the Senate bill, Eisenhower called a group down at the White House, including Charlie Halleck and myself, and Ed McCabe, who is now an attorney in Washington and was assigned to the White House to handle this particular bill.

Our problem was getting a coalition together that could support a tough labor reform bill, which meant we couldn't have Barden because Barden was too identified as being anti-labor, but Landrum, being a conservative, would follow the Barden line without having the Barden identification. So it wasn't difficult to find a Democrat to sponsor a coalition bill. But on the Republican side we had a different problem. At that time, Carroll Kearns of Pennsylvania was ranking member and Carroll, bless his heart, had a few personal problems that made it difficult for him to be alert at all times, and Clare Hoffman was a sort of wild-eyed radical, early right-winger, and myself. I couldn't sponsor a labor reform bill, representing a labor district, so we got down to the point where we had to decide who we could get on the Republican side who had some credibility and who could handle himself well. I suggested to Charlie Halleck that we mention to Ed McCabe and the president, Bobby Griffin of Michigan--Bobby was in his second term; he was a very able lawyer and he impressed me. He had somewhat of a labor background. His father had been a carpenter, and a member of the union and Bobby didn't come from a silk-stocking background, so to speak. And the president said, "Griffin? Who's he?" And Halleck explained that I felt that he was perfectly qualified and that although Halleck

[AYRES] didn't know him that well, he had been impressed with the way he handled himself on the floor and so forth. So it was decided that we would have a Landrum-Griffin bill, and the White House wrote the bill and we made a few changes on it.

We never offered it in the committee because we didn't want it to be defeated, or have it said that the bill was already considered by the committee and turned down. So we had Landrum introduce the bill and I told Phil to check with the parliamentarian, get a good easy number because we're going to have to blanket the country for support on this. So we got the number H. R. 8400, which was easy to remember and have the people wire in to support H. R. 8400. That was the Landrum-Griffin bill beginning, and then after the bill had been introduced and the opposition saw that they were going to be in trouble they started to offer all sorts of amendments to the House bill. I had my staff go through and clip their proposed amendments and put them on a string so I could show the House what they'd be voting for if they voted for the committee bill.

[END SIDE 2, TAPE IV
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE V]

[AYRES] "This is how fragile this bill is, and how many of you know what any of these amendments are? So the smart thing to do is just support the bill that you know, that you've had a chance for a month to review." So the Landrum-Griffin bill passed the House. It was a good vote we had in the House.

Then we went to conference with the Landrum-Griffin bill. That was the first time that I had been exposed to Archibald Cox, who we all know was later to participate in the Watergate operation. Archibald, Professor Cox, was Kennedy's counsel and during the process of the conference we had some very, very interesting . . . it's a shame for historians that all that isn't recorded someplace, but there are no reporters in on conference, of course. We had some big names in there at that time. We had Senator [Everett] Dirksen; we had Senator [Barry] Goldwater, we had Senator [Winston] Prouty, and then, of course, Kennedy's counsel, Cox. On the Republican side we had [Graham] Barden and [Philip] Landrum and, of course, [Robert] Griffin and myself and several others. The animosity that developed between Graham Barden and Archibald Cox was really something to watch. Graham just couldn't stand this easterner and he'd take off on Cox. On one occasion, I recall, he told Cox, "Professor, you haven't any idea what you're talking about. You're just mouthing all these things. And, Kennedy, Senator, all you do is nod your head."

[AYRES] And Kennedy said to Barden, "Don't you ever pick on my friend here who's the most able man in this room," and Barden came back and said, "Well, he may be able, but by the time this conference is over, his position will never prevail."

And, of course, at that time they had to get a bill out and the Landrum-Griffin bill came out almost intact. But Kennedy, to protect his presidential aspirations which were beginning to grow in '59, and everybody was aware of it, had to get a bill that he could associate with and go back to the Senate and be for, because he had to have some kind of a reform bill. He couldn't be the one who was blamed for killing it. So I met with Barden and Griffin, and not being an attorney, I didn't know all the fine meaning of the words they were trying to use but I said, "You've got to put something in here so that Kennedy can hang his hat on it when he goes back to the Senate. He's got to say that we accepted this and we accepted that." So they worked out a few little things that didn't mean a thing. But if you read the record, Kennedy went back in the Senate and argued for passage of the conference report on the basis that they accepted this and they accepted this and they accepted this, which, as I say, meant nothing, but it got past the Senate and, of course, the conference report buzzed through the House. But, as I recall, the conference lasted about six weeks, a long drawn-out affair.

MORRISSEY: And rather tense, I gather, from your description of it?

AYRES: Yes, it was. We had some people in there who didn't mind speaking up, like Dirksen and Goldwater, and they could tell Kennedy off pretty well, which they didn't hesitate to do.

MORRISSEY: And they did?

AYRES: Oh, yes.

MORRISSEY: Dirksen, with his typical prose?

AYRES: Oh, yes. Everett would say, "Well, now friends, let's be very, very patient on this because, after all, the senator is a young man." [Chuckle.]

MORRISSEY: And Kennedy took that without blowing his top?

AYRES: Well, there wasn't a whole lot he could do with his own colleagues. He didn't pick on his own colleagues. You know, they had the privilege of the Senate floor; we didn't have, because he knew very well that Goldwater would go out and take the floor, say, "Well, now just a minute. I'd like to say to the senator from Massachusetts that isn't what happened and he knows it," and Dirksen, in his style, could make a monkey out of him. But, no, most of his caustic remarks were directed at Barden or to Griffin or to me. Kennedy didn't get in many heated discussions with his own colleagues because in the back of his mind he knew all the time, of course, that he had to take that conference report and get it through the Senate because if he didn't, then his credibility, his wanting to clean up the McLellan hearings findings, was not sincere.

MORRISSEY: Somewhere I read that you came out with a very critical statement about the lobbying of the National Education Association.

AYRES: Well, when the federal aid to education bill was up, the National Education Association, I thought, was being very, very political in their approach, because they, by indirection, had threatened to defeat any member who wasn't in accord with their position. And I felt that the educators should remain out of the political arena because, actually, the federal aid to education bill at that point didn't have a whole lot to do with improving education at the local level. And I had felt for a long period of time, even dating back to my own school days-- and I presume my thinking was influenced by my own background, in which my family were in the ministerial field and I thought that most people went into the ministry because they felt dedicated to that position--I felt that teachers were somewhat the same way, that if they wanted to be business people, they could have gone into business. But I felt that they didn't take a teaching job just because it was the only job available, but they trained themselves in the field of education in college, they went on and got masters [degrees] in special fields because that's what they wanted to do; they wanted to teach. If they wanted to be politicians they could have run for office; and I thought that they were getting a little far afield when the national association tried to speak for all these dedicated teachers throughout the country, and said, "This is what we are going to do if we don't get our way." I thought they were very much out of character.

MORRISSEY: Did the teachers in your own district organize politically?

AYRES: Fortunately, I had a superintendent of schools in the area that more or less agreed with me. He thought the NEA was overstepping its bounds. They were never able to get my teachers really organized because, I think, by my comments, I had sort of praised the teachers as being great people; leave the politics to somebody else.

MORRISSEY: In 1965 you supported the right-to-work section--no, I'm confused. I was thinking of 14b, but that is part of Landrum-Griffin.

AYRES: No, 14b is Taft-Hartley.

MORRISSEY: Goes back to Taft-Hartley?

AYRES: That's the repeal. I supported the repeal of 14b which was a position I had taken back in 1958 when the right-to-work issue was up in Ohio, because I felt that if you were going to have a federal labor law, then it should be a federal law and if you were going to authorize the operation of the right-to-work, that it should be at the federal level and not at the state level, which was what it amounted to in the repeal of 14b. And when that came up on the floor, since my position was contrary to the Republican position, I did not handle the bill. I had been consistent on it, I had testified before the Platform Committee in the 1960 Republican National Convention before the late Senator Bush, George Bush's father, Prescott Bush, saying that repeal of 14b should be in the Republican Platform because it was more of an emotional issue with labor and also an emotional issue with business. In fact, most of your northern states who did not have right-to-work laws were at a disadvantage if business went into the South where they weren't all organized, and I felt that from a competitive angle, if you're going to have a federal labor law, that law should apply to all states, and everybody should operate on the same ground rules.

MORRISSEY: With respect to the poverty program in 1965, you opposed that?

AYRES: Yes, that was when, let's see, I guess Sargent Shriver was the so-called poverty czar. The only program that I felt they should be concentrating on in the poverty program was the Job Corps because I felt for a long time that people have to learn to earn, and there are an awful lot of people who aren't going to go on to higher education--some of them might not even finish high school--and that the Job Corps, if they'd just concentrated on that, could be a success. But it was very apparent to me

[AYRES] that when they got into the community action programs with all of the monies that were going into them, those programs were going to provide jobs for administrators, which, as it turned out, they were. People could get on the public payroll and get a job as a director of a community action program and then bring all their cousins, aunts, and uncles in. This had to be a good operation for themselves. But they weren't going to create any jobs. And it goes back to the same thing I said before--that nothing happens until somebody sells something, until the economy starts moving, and they weren't going to create anything; they were just going to take public monies and pay several, maybe hundreds of thousands of people in little community centers all over the country, and when that was over, nobody was going to have learned to earn. So I opposed it--but supported the Job Corps provisions.

Well, Sargent Shriver and I got to be very, very well acquainted. In fact, it got to be sort of a running battle between us as to who was going to embarrass whom. They had a Women's Job Corps in Charleston, West Virginia--and I had a counsel then who was a former FBI man, John Buckley, who was very able. (John made a little news later on in the Muskie campaign. He was the one who picked up the stooge that they had sent over to be in Muskie's headquarters--Fat John, I guess they called him. And he made quite a bit of news in the Muskie campaign later on.) I had sent him out to Charleston to see how this job corps was going and he came back and said, "They're doing a good job. It's a Women's Job Corps," he said. "These people are underprivileged; they've been brought in there, they're being taught to type and being taught to file," and I said, "Well, John, why don't we really give Shriver the business, and also the committee. Go back out there and get the most qualified, underprivileged black you can find. Bring her in and we'll put her on as a secretary to the committee." Well, we found a dandy. She had come from North Carolina, she came from a broken home, her father had been in jail for bootlegging, her mother was a maid--as it turned out, her mother had been a maid for Congressman [Jimi] Broyhill's family. He found out about it after he had hired her, so he wanted his picture taken with her too. So we brought this young lady in and she could type, she was very pleasant, very neat, and worked out just fine. Well, that really embarrassed Shriver. Here we'd been telling them that the only thing that worked was the Job Corps and why didn't the Democrats hire some of these people? Why did they wait for Republicans to do it? So, she got her picture in the papers, coming to work in Washington, first one from the Job Corps that had been put on a congressional payroll. Shriver had a few kicks out of that. Where Shriver

[AYRES] made his mistakes, when he'd get in one of these moods, he would write me little notes, and I had a good filing system. So when he came out to my district to talk for my opponent, I had a picture of Shriver and myself where we were telling each other off, and some of these little notes that he'd written me. He was a very nice gentleman. He commended me on hiring this Job Corps girl, and now maybe I'd change my mind on the poverty program, and so forth. But I ran this picture of Shriver and myself the day he was coming to town, and took a little editorial liberty and lifted a few sentences from some of those letters where he'd praised me. And I think the ad was captioned, "Why are you against me, Sarge, after saying all these nice things?" So he spent all his time trying to explain the poverty program. I think he forgot to talk about my opponent that night when he came to town. [Laughter.]

But I think the way the poverty program turned out, it proved our position was somewhat correct. If we had just concentrated on vocational training, Job Corps operation type of thing, it would have been much better.

MORRISSEY: As a member of the Veterans Affairs Committee, did you have a chance to work on vocational education and training?

AYRES: Yes. In fact, I had pushed vocational training even for the draftees way back in 1951. I felt that before we discharged a man, he ought to learn something besides how to handle a grenade. And then in the Veterans Committee we were able to push--Tiger Teague and myself--push the vocational end of the GI bill so that the GI bill would cover those who wanted to go into technical schools.

MORRISSEY: Was this the so-called GI bill for Korean War veterans?

AYRES: It was expanded, yes. It was an amendment of the GI bill which was passed right after World War II, but the vocational end of it was one that I pushed, and, of course, the largest percentage of people coming out of the service aren't going on to college, and there again, resorting back to my favorite phrase, they had to learn to earn. And one place they could do it was learning a trade, learning a skill in the vocational field.

MORRISSEY: How'd the army react to that?

AYRES: The army was never too enthused about it. In fact, the generals would say, "We're here to teach fellows to fight, and let the civilian corps . . ." In fact, I even got into that when I took the appointment

[AYRES] from President Nixon on the Jobs for Veterans Program after I left Congress. I fought tooth and nail with the military to have a transition period where these men were given a chance to come out automobile mechanics, carpenters; and they had a program for a while, but their heart was never in it. The professional soldier never got too excited about training a man to be a good civilian, and it was defeating their own purpose. At least that's what they would say to me. "Look," they'd say, "We're here to convince the man that he should become a career military man, and if we teach him how to be a bricklayer and he can make ten dollars an hour on the outside, how are we going to keep him in the service?" I said, "Well, you aren't going to keep them all, you know that. So those who don't want to stay, why not give them a break so that they don't get out and be on unemployment when they leave the service?" But I never got very far with the military. After the men got out, under the GI bill--the vocational phase of it--they did have an opportunity to do something.

MORRISSEY: Is there other legislation we haven't talked about which represented your desire to achieve this point about "a person must learn to earn"?

AYRES: Well, I presume the main thing in that area was battling George Meaney time and time again, both on a private basis and sometimes before the committee, on the issue of breaking down the barriers of discrimination in organized labor. Although Meaney would take the stand and say, "We're doing all of this we can," they never really made the effort to open up the apprenticeship program, and you can't be a journeyman until you're an apprentice, and you can't be a master plumber until you've been a journeyman. They never really opened it up to the minorities. And the one thing that organized labor was going to have to do if it was going to bring down the unemployment amongst the minorities, was give them a chance to learn a trade. I pushed very hard for that and I think some of my efforts paid off because, although it's still not wide open by any means, there's a much better opportunity for a member of the minorities to become a journeyman carpenter, electrician, sheet metal worker, and so forth, now than there was twenty-five years ago.

MORRISSEY: I gather you and Chairman Teague got along very well together?

AYRES: Yes. I think history will probably record that Teague, in modern times, has been one of the most effective legislators in the Congress. He probably will have more legislation by bill number attributed to him than any member of Congress, I believe, in the history

[AYRES] of the Congress. And I think the one thing that Teague understood with me was that my desire to help the veterans was sincere and I didn't want to hurt the organized veterans organizations, but I couldn't accept their positions many times just because they supposedly had a lot of clout. And there were a number of occasions in the Veterans Committee when Teague and myself were almost standing alone. But I was able to survive some of the organized veterans' objections in my first three or four terms, and they saw that some of the positions that they were taking were rather ridiculous. For example, this sounds rather odd to be talking about 4 percent interest rates on home mortgages now, but that's what the GI bill specified back in '51 through, oh, up until the middle fifties. And I realized that at 4-1/2 percent you could get mortgage money for GI loans, but at 4 percent, there just wasn't any money. Or, they were having to pay points and so forth, which ran the cost up even higher. I proposed that we raise the interest rate to 4-1/2 percent so that the GI could utilize the GI loan program for his home. And organized veterans just fought it tooth and nail because they had to have this special break, they thought, for the veteran. Well, as Teague and I argued, what good does it do to have a 4 percent rate if there's no money? You can have the best program in the world and the man be able to go out and get a home for \$10,000 or \$12,000, but if he can't get the mortgage he can't get the home. When I became chairman of a sub-committee in the 83rd Congress, I held hearings throughout the country and it became very apparent that the GI interest rate should be raised. We'd ask any number of wives that came in who'd say, in answer to my question, "Well, would you be willing to pay 4-1/2 percent if you could get a loan?" --- I'd pay 5. I'll pay 6. But I have to have the house."

Well, we generated much grass-roots interest across the country in our hearings. We went out to Cleveland where we might have sort of broken the rules of the House at that time, because we weren't supposed to have any cameras present. There hadn't been any hearings out there, to speak of, at that time, and here was the local congressman holding one in Cleveland--I figured I'd get the Akron people there just as easily. It would do me as much good politically to hold it in Cleveland, and maybe a little more so with the television stations there. The Akron Beacon Journal agreed to and were anxious to cover this whole hearing with cameras and quotes in their rotogravure section of their Sunday paper, so they came up and covered the whole hearing and no one objected. Teague didn't object so there wasn't any issue made of it. I presume if he'd objected, said, "We've got to get the cameras out while we're testifying and get

[AYRES] the recording machines out," it would have held up. Of course, now that's all been changed.

But we had literally dozens of people come in wanting a house and willing to pay a higher interest rate, and the organized veterans group were arguing for 4 percent. We put an organized veteran on and then maybe three or four people who wanted homes and the organized veterans were just defeated overwhelmingly. They finally got off that issue. We did get the interest rate increased and then the mortgage money started to flow.

MORRISSEY: Are the veterans groups united as a lobby?

AYRES: They're united as a lobby, but they're highly overrated.

MORRISSEY: Are they? That was my next question.

AYRES: They talk about the two and three million membership that they have, but the number of people that they actually get out to a club meeting--for instance, my own post at home when I was there, the Wendell Willkie American Legion Post, I think we had about six hundred members, but about twenty regularly attended a meeting. A lot of people just belonged because it was the thing to do at the time they joined. That may change a little bit when the Vietnam veteran gets into the leadership positions. They may take a little more active part. But when the commander of a national veterans organization says, "This is the position we take," and they send a telegram to the Congress, the Congress runs for cover, but I don't think they really have to.

MORRISSEY: That's interesting.

AYRES: In this last bill that President Carter sent up on veterans preference, I think Carter was perfectly justified in what he was proposing, and had I been a member of the House, I would have supported him on it and talked for it. I recall when Teague and I stood almost alone on another issue.

Back twenty-five years ago the World War I boys were pretty strong and the VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars] was proposing a pension for World War I veterans of \$120 a month regardless of need, and \$20 bonus, I think, if you had served overseas. That was to appeal to the VFW. And the [American] Légion was for the pension. All the veterans organizations were, except the AMVETS, who were sort of lukewarm. Well, to me that was just absurd. In the first place we were going to be giving \$120 to an awful

[AYRES] lot of people who weren't in need. Secondly, we were going to set a precedent with the fourteen million plus World War II veterans coming into the picture who would be sixty-five and there would probably be ten million of them living when they were sixty-five. So you take ten million times \$120 a month, because in veterans legislation, after you once set the precedent, you never take it away. Oh, no, you can't take it away.

So, we took our position on the veterans pension bill, Teague and myself. Although it passed the House overwhelmingly, we were able to prevail in the Senate and in conference, because at that time there wasn't a veterans affairs committee in the Senate. It was all handled either by the Public Welfare Committee or the Finance Committee. Pensions came under Finance and that was Russell Long, and Russell . . . we could reason with Russell. He said, "No, this is ridiculous." So it never became the law of the land, thank goodness, or it would have been a mighty expensive operation.

MORRISSEY: When you're working on an issue like mortgage money at 4-1/2 percent, how strong are the banking interests, the real estate interests?

AYRES: They were for us but they really didn't care whether we got it or not because there were plenty of places for them to put their money without worrying about the GI loan, because the FHA [Federal Housing Administration] could use all the money that was necessary. Of course, some of the national veterans organizations were arguing that we should expand the direct loan program. Now the direct loan program under the VA [Veterans Administration] says that you can borrow directly from the government, from the VA, if in your community there are no facilities, as in sparsely populated areas. Well, what they were saying was that no money is available, so therefore we can enlarge the direct loan program. Well, you have the direct loan program with billions of dollars and I was of the philosophy, get the government out of business, not into business.

[END SIDE 1, TAPE V
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE V]

MORRISSEY: Weren't you and the veterans organizations juxtaposed in opposition to each other?

AYRES: Yes, on the pension issue, the VFW was very, very bitter toward me personally, because they felt that I was the one who had sort of goaded Teague into taking the position that he did. In fact, we had one incident that sort of turned the VFW around, though, because they did a

[AYRES] very, very stupid thing. The local commander, that is, the state commander from Ohio, had come from my district and he came down to Washington in, I believe this was in '59--yes, because Nixon was vice-president--and they wanted to present a certificate to Judge Burton from Cleveland and give him an honorary life membership in the VFW for his Cleveland post because he was retiring or had retired from the Court. And they also wanted to meet with Vice President Nixon, who was a member of the VFW. So I went to quite a bit of effort to get Justice Burton to agree to meet with them and receive this plaque and have his picture taken and so forth, and the same thing with Vice President Nixon. Nixon was very cooperative with me, always had been. So I arranged all of this, got the pictures taken, and everybody was very, very happy. And needless to say, with Nixon and the commanders, and with Burton, I was in the pictures also. . . . Well, I learned a long time ago, even back in the business days, if you think you're going to get cropped out of the picture, get in the middle [laughter], so in each of the pictures I was there with Burton and with Nixon, very nice picture. Well, they carried this in their national magazine and 'lo and behold, no Bill Ayres. And one picture had Tiger Teague in it too--no Tiger Teague. Believe it or not, their professional art people had painted us right out of the middle of the picture and put a fern in.

MORRISSEY: A fern?

AYRES: Yes, some little background, you know, to fill in the space. So I went to the photography expert at the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee, Bob Brockhurst, and I said, "Bob, how in the world did they do this?" I had the original prints, and he said, "Oh, I'll show you." So he took a brush and just painted it out and he said, "You just darken this and it looks like a plant." He said, "That's just art work. Oh, sure, it's no problem at all." He took the two originals that I had and did exactly what they had done. So then I went to Teague and I said, "Look what they did. Here were you, here was I, and here was the vice-president and here was Justice Burton, here was the commander--no Teague, no Ayres. That's dirty pool, isn't it?" I said, "It's not only dirty pool, but," I said, "it's dishonest"--because they didn't mention that we had arranged for this meeting. We were putting ourselves out to do it and they never would have gotten the vice-president or Justice Burton, either one, without someone being the go-between. So Teague said, "Well, let's call them up and give them hell." I said, "Let's have a hearing. I'll get these all mounted and blown up on a big board and I can have our

[AYRES] own photographers do that, and we'll just call them in and say, 'Why did you do this?'

Well, at that time, a fellow who was to become congressman later on was the commander of the VFW, and he was a Republican, [Richard] Roudebush of Indiana. So I got a call from Roudebush. He was up in Maine, and he said, "Bill Ayres. This is Rowdy." "Rowdy who?" He says, "Roudebush of Indiana. Commander VFW." I said, "Oh, it's nice of you to call. Do you want us to subpoena you too?" I knew exactly what he was calling about. He said, "No, no. Can't we work this out?" He said, "They made a terrible mistake." He said, "You know, I'm a Republican," he said, "they weren't doing this on a partisan basis. We get some fellows that go off a little half-cocked." I said, "No, there's no way of calling it off, but there's a way of calling you in." I said, "If you're responsible for the troops," I said, "they'd just better admit it when they come before the committee, because if they've been this dishonest in this, who can trust their fund-raising? Who's going to buy your VFW trinkets?" I said, "Tiger Teague is furious. I didn't particularly care. They ran the picture in my hometown paper and those are the people who vote for me. But the fact that they would stoop to this and misrepresent the actual meaning," and I said, "Of course, the vice-president is going to be furious because he only did it to assist me; he didn't care about the certificate from the VFW."

Well, Rowdy was really shook, and he caught a plane and got down here right away. I knew him by sight, but didn't know him really very well. He had just been made commander of the VFW and he hadn't been in politics at all; he became a member of the House later. So we had the hearing and this was all blown up and the executive director of the VFW had to admit that they did the wrong thing. Teague and I got letters of apology and we called it off, and from that time on the VFW was very friendly. In fact, I worked very closely with them on many other things.

MORRISSEY: Let me go to the Education and Labor Committee, because we really haven't talked about Adam Clayton Powell.

AYRES: Well, that would take several weeks [laughter] if you went into all the escapades of Adam. Adam was a very able legislator, a terrific preacher, orator, great sense of humor; was to a degree a little too arrogant for his time. Had Adam been a member of the Black Caucus today, he wouldn't have been treated as he was by the Congress.

[AYRES] But his arrogance stemmed from the fact that he didn't think that they would dare penalize a black for some minor infraction of the rules of the House. Of course, it's ironic that the fellow who got rid of Adam, who really put the heat on and wouldn't make any concessions when Adam finally became a little humble, was Wayne Hays. And Wayne is no longer there--not that his downfall is comparable to Adam's. Adam may have been a little more discreet in his outside activities than Wayne. The big controversy, of course, was not over having Adam's wife on the payroll--there were an awful lot of congressmen who had people on the payroll that were relatives--not whether or not she was performing her duties, but it was the fact that he used committee funds to journey back and forth to Puerto Rico. And I tried to get Adam to go to the House Administration Committee and say, "Here are my records. Here is what I paid out of committee funds for what you conatrue as private trips, although I had someone down there to see and did conduct some work, and if there's a controversy, I'll pay it." And the case would have been over. But the House Administration Committee and Wayne Hays weren't too anxious . . . as I understand, Adam never really quite made the offer, but Wayne wasn't at all cooperative in having the offer made either. So, Adam got himself in a position then where it was very, very difficult to vote for Adam to remain in the House because you could talk about the principle of not seating him all you wanted to and how it was unconstitutional, which I argued that it was, and which the Court eventually showed that Adam and I were right on it.

Adam was far ahead of his time in the proposals that he made before the Congress. In fact, he was used by the Congress. This was a very hypocritical part of the history of the Congress. We had what was known as the Powell Amendment and the Powell Amendment said that no federal funds can go into a state that practices segregation. At that time in the fifties, of course, we had segregation. Some House members would try to get this Powell Amendment put on legislation involving federal expenditures. Then, when the amendment was offered, it would be offered in the committee as a whole which meant it would have a teller vote on it, which was not recorded. Members would make sure that there were enough went through the line to get the Powell Amendment on and then vote against the bill because the Powell Amendment was on it. And Adam was sincere in what he was trying to do. He was trying to break the backs of the segregationists by saying, "Okay, we'll cut off your funds if you have segregation." Adam knew he was being used but he had no alternative except to try to get his position through at that time. [William L.] Dawson of Illinois, who was becoming quite aged and who was more or

[AYRES] less known as Daley's man in the Congress from Chicago, and Adam, were the only two blacks in the House and Adam was the articulate one of the two.

He ran a very efficient committee. Johnson never would have gotten his New Society program through had Adam not pushed as he did. But underneath it all, Adam was very fair. I went to him with the Hoffa situation when Bobby Kennedy had denied Jimmy Hoffa a bond by indirection, by notifying all the bonding companies, "Don't bond this fellow." Hoffa came to me with his problem. Adam called a hearing, had Bobby Kennedy explain--Bobby didn't come himself, he sent one of his aides--explain the situation and they couldn't answer it; and within hours after Adam had wired all of these bonding companies--over two hundred of them, saying, "Why can't Hoffa get a bond?" Kennedy pulled off the wolves, so to speak, and Hoffa got his bond. But I don't know what would have happened Bobby Kennedy might have gotten away with it had Adam not called the hearing. Adam didn't mind facing up to controversy. Of course, he had been raised on controversy in his Harlem area.

MORRISSEY: Why would Hoffa come to you on an issue like that?

AYRES: Well, Sid Zagary came to me because he was Hoffa's Hill representative--after Hoffa had fought me so hard in 1960, I got to know him. He figured that I'd be fair about it and he also felt, I presume, that I might not be against exposing Bobby Kennedy in his desire to get Hoffa. This was the beginning of the vendetta that went out and finally got him.

MORRISSEY: Did Hoffa exert a lot of muscle in your district?

AYRES: 'Course the trucking industry started at Akron. And he had a good following there and had a good DRIVE [Democratic Republican Independent Voter Education] organization there which was the political arm, and I presume had we not given him such a drubbing in 1960 when he went all out to defeat me, not realizing that I had such a weak opponent, he might have been more effective. But after that they were more or less helpful to me.

MORRISSEY: How?

AYRES: They supported me. His auxiliary, the DRIVE ladies, addressed envelopes, licked stamps, and of course, at that time, with the AFL-CIO fighting me so

[AYRES] hard and Hoffa fighting them, it was a chance for him to sort of thumb his nose at them by supporting me.

MORRISSEY: Are there other instances you could recall where members of Congress voted for something in order to vote against it?

AYRES: Well, of course, they can't do that today because the teller votes are recorded, but, oh, there are all sorts of . . . mostly just the Powell Amendment. I don't think it was the general practice. Of course, that was the philosophy of the southerners at that time. If they didn't want the federal aid program expanded and they didn't want to alienate somebody who might be getting some money, they knew that they would understand, "Well, we wouldn't have gotten any of that money anyway," because they voted against the bill, not on the basis of the issue but on the basis that the Powell Amendment was in it. That applied time and time again to federal aid to education bills when they came up.

MORRISSEY: You told me some time ago about how minority staffing started in Congress.

AYRES: Well, Adam had a good staff, and he had a big staff, but they were capable people. He came to me right after I was the ranking member in '65 and wanted me to go over to the House Administration Committee with him to get his budget approved for \$500,000. Well, the way the Congress has expanded that doesn't sound like a whole lot of money, but it was a lot of money then for a committee. And I said, "Adam, that's an awful lot of money. How are you going to justify that? I know you've got a good staff, but \$500,000. . ." He said, "Well, you've got to come along on it because we've been working very closely here and we've got a lot of work to do." He said, "I think you'll be hurting yourself if you don't." I said, "Well, Adam, I don't think I can go along with you." He said, "Well, if you can't go for the \$500,000, then we're going to have to go for \$750,000. Might as well . . ." I said, "Adam, you're crazy. They'll laugh you out of the room. They'll fight you tooth and nail." He said, "Well, wait a minute." He said, "Two hundred fifty thousand of that is going to be for your staff." I said, "When do we go?" [Laughter.]

So that was the beginning of minority staffing. And we had a great staff. I was able to get one of the best labor lawyers from the Senate, Mike Bernstein. As I told you in the earlier interview, I was able to get Charlie Radcliffe who was an expert in the field of education. I was able to get Dr. [Marty] Lavoro, who worked very closely with the poverty program. That's

[AYRES] where I was able to get John Buckley to come in as our director, who was the best on the Hill of any staff man in his field, top-notch clerical director of the staff. With \$250,000, we could do a lot. Then I could give the subcommittee chairmen, in some cases where they had a lot of work to do, a special staff member. When the poverty program came along, I was able to give [Charles] Goodell assistance, and Al Quie an aide, so we had something that could not only compete with Adam and his staff, but we could make the minority voice heard because we went into the debates on the floor well-informed and well-fortified for the battle. For the first couple of years the other committees didn't catch on as to what we were doing. And I finally said to the leadership, "This is ridiculous that you go up there with the majority and you approve these staff budgets and you don't get anything." I said, "Why have we been successful in blocking some of these programs? Because we've had the staff." Well, if there was one thing I ever did that cost the taxpayers a lot of money, it was that, and I sort of regret that we went as far as we did because now they've just gone overboard. It's utterly absurd, ridiculous, having to build new buildings to house staff, and there isn't that much more trouble in the world that requires that type of operation. And, then, of course, everybody now, after he's here two years, wants a subcommittee, and if he has a subcommittee, then he has to have a staff.

I guess the most frightening example was the Wayne Hays incident. He had the little girl, buried down in the room, who said she couldn't even answer the telephone.

MORRISSEY: Did Wayne Hays represent an adjoining district to yours?

AYRES: No. There was one district between us. Wayne's was down on the river.

MORRISSEY: So through the years you didn't have mutual constituents or other matters?

AYRES: No. But I always got along with Wayne all right. His bully attitude never bullied me, and I had no direct contact with him. I think it's a shame what happened to him. Of course, Wayne, over the years, hadn't made a lot of friends in the Congress so when he stubbed his toe, there were a lot of people there anxious to push.

MORRISSEY: You voted against the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1967.

AYRES: That's right.

MORRISSEY: Why?

AYRES: I felt that if the federal government was going to get in this field it should be done with grants back to the states, rather than trying to run it out of Washington, and I think . . . look at HEW [Health, Education, and Welfare]. They've gotten so big that now they want to have a separate cabinet position for education, and I figured all along if they're going to have an education department, they should have it at the state level because it's that important. But I think literally millions and millions of dollars are being wasted that should go back to the states direct and let them run the show. I don't think we need the education department at all. I think our kids would get just as good an education if the Department of Education were closed up and phased out over the next year.

I think anyone that goes in and takes an honest appraisal of it would discover that the actual aid to the education of our children is not enhanced by having a Department of Education in the federal government.

MORRISSEY: I gather that was a prevailing frustration that you had--that so much money goes into building a federal bureaucracy, be it poverty, education, or whatever, that doesn't get to the person for whom the legislation is passed . . .

AYRES: Right.

MORRISSEY: . . . be he student, the veteran, the disabled, the pensioner, whatever . . .

AYRES: I had a favorite story I used to tell on this to emphasize the point, to bring it right down to, as the old saying goes, where the calf could get it. As the story goes, this little fellow wanted to buy his mother a Christmas present but he didn't have any money, so he thought that he would write Santa Claus and tell him not to bring him anything, but if he could please send him a dollar he would buy his mother a present and that would make him just as happy as if Santa had brought him a present. Well, the letter wound up in the dead letter office in Washington and some postal clerk who was going through dead letters saw it and thought, "How disappointed this little kid's going to be. Here he's expecting some money from Santa Claus to buy his mother a present and Christmas is going to come and go and he won't have heard from Santa Claus." So, the postal clerk, being a kind, humanitarian person, wrote the little fellow a nice note and signed it "Santa Claus" and included a half a dollar. And the little fellow wrote back to Santa and said, "Dear Santa: I received your letter in which I had

[AYRES] requested a dollar. Next time, please don't send it by way of Washington. They kept 50¢."

And that's exactly what happens in your federal programs that are absurd to begin with. It goes to Washington and they keep 50¢. I wish Carter a lot of luck if he really gets into it in cutting down the size of the bureaucracy and I don't know how he can do it with the civil service jobs being frozen in as they are. But the millions and millions of dollars and billions that are being spent in these agencies--it's just unbelievable. Had I been aware of some of the things that I've learned since I've been on the outside, just how bad it was, I think I would have been far more vocal when I was in the Congress.

MORRISSEY: What do you mean by that, specifically? You mean being in business now?

AYRES: Yes, and realizing how the regulatory agencies can harass the people unnecessarily, the various things that are being done supposedly for the people which they really don't need, and the volume of paperwork that goes on. In fact, they had a commission to study the paperwork and now they've discovered that they've got more paperwork going on now than they had before they had the commission. [Laughter.] It's just ridiculous.

You can see why there's a taxpayers' revolt. Of course, it was interesting the other day, the professional football player for the Redskins, he makes \$100,000 a year, got his monthly check and walked off the field because it's the most money he's ever seen, but the government kept almost 50 percent of it. He said, "No way am I going to keep this up." [Laughter.]

Of course, we have a great land and as long as people can afford to pay the taxes and have a little left to enjoy a few things, I guess there won't be a national revolt, but I can see it coming.

MORRISSEY: There are a couple of pieces of social legislation I want to ask you about. One was to make social security benefits available to the disabled before they reached the--whatever the mandatory age is--sixty-five, I suppose.

AYRES: Well, so much legislation comes about because of the personal experience.

MORRISSEY: Does it really? In terms of dealing with constituents?

AYRES: Yes. The disability provision in the social security, I presume, had been thought of by a number of people prior to my mentioning it to Wilbur Mills.

But I had a very dear friend at home who was an architect, and he had a heart operation and a piece of calcium chipped off and got into his brain and he had a major stroke, and his whole right side was paralyzed. Well, you can realize an architect can't do very much without the use of his hands. His name was Delbert Henninger, and Delbert was only fifty-four at the time. He was a little older than I was, and had been covered by social security from the time it was started, and I thought, "Well, isn't this ridiculous? Here's Delbert, he's permanently and totally disabled, far more so than if he had reached sixty-five and had had all his faculties." So I thought, "Well, why, if a man is totally disabled for life, why don't we give him an opportunity to start drawing his social security?" So I went to Wilbur Mills with the idea and I introduced the bill. Not being a member of the Ways and Means Committee, I had no direct control over it. But Wilbur said, "Yeah, that makes sense," so in order to cover my friend, I worded the bill that if a person were over fifty, it would take care of him. So that was the beginning of the social security disability payment and, of course, now they've taken the age limit off completely, because anyone who is permanently and totally disabled is eligible to start drawing his social security pension.

MORRISSEY: The other piece of legislation that I'm interested in, in terms of your own involvement, was to take the lid off the amount of money social security recipients can earn.

AYRES: Yes. They're coming around to that. Of course, it takes a long time for an idea to jell, but I felt that if a man retired from a corporation where he had been covered by social security and had paid his dues, that after he left that corporation and if he wanted to start a business or go out and be a salesman, or whatever, that he should be allowed to earn. I couldn't see where that was going to hurt the tax structure at all, and I still don't. And now they're talking about it, and within the next ten years you can bet your dollars that it will be completely off, because they've already, of course, reduced the age of no limit earnings to seventy-two . . . why wait 'til you're too old to earn a little?

[END SIDE 2, TAPE V
BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE VI]

[AYRES] This was one example of a bill resulting from personal experience. I had a young veteran at home [Ohio] who had arthritis of the spine, and for two years I watched this fellow go from a height of 5 foot 8 down to about 5 foot 5, he was just stooping over more and more. This had started, his shortening, his stooping, the first year he was out of the service, and I assumed that it must be service-connected, but we couldn't prove it because there was a controversy as to whether or not it was two years or one year since he'd been examined, so I thought, "Well, we've got to take care of this fellow." His name was Paul Gandell. I said, "It's just going to be a matter of time until he can't work. It must have started while he was in the service and there must be a presumptive period." I finally got the VA to admit that it was within the two-year period. So I went to Tiger Teague and said, "We've got to get a bill through making arthritis presumptive for three years," which we did. So arthritis became a presumptive disease: if it happened within three years after the discharge, it would be assumed to be presumptive. And Paul Gandell started to draw disability pay. I heard from him . . . oh, several years ago. I assume he's still living, and he's drawing full disability now. He can't work, he's only about 5 feet now, he's just completely stooped.

MORRISSEY: Other instances of legislation having their origins in experiences like that?

AYRES: Well, mostly on the investigative side. A service man writes and tells you how he's goofing off and why can't he come home, and that sort of thing. A lot of little investigative things have started on a personal experience.

MORRISSEY: After our previous interview, we chatted briefly about the lady who was sponsoring the so-called prayer amendment who came from your district.

AYRES: Yes. Mrs. Ruhlin was from Cuyahoga Falls, which is just outside Akron. Well, Mrs. Ruhlin was very, very dedicated to her cause, but somewhat politically naive as to how she could get members to jump at her every wish. But she did do her best to get the amendment . . . 'course she got in on the thing a little late in the game because it was already the Becker Amendment, which had been introduced by Congressman [Frank] Becker . . . he'd been pushing for years for that, but I was out of Congress when Mrs. Ruhlin finally got it approved on the floor. She was a very, very interesting person and really gung-ho . . . but I think she probably alienated a lot of members of Congress who sort of felt she was wearing out her welcome. She thought each one should really get out

[AYRES] and that's all he should be doing, just pushing her amendment. As we all know, they had a lot of other things to do as well.

MORRISSEY: Can you tell me about this forum represented by the clipping?

AYRES: Well, after I had conducted the forum on the draft in my district, I felt that the people who were involved were people who were concerned, people who were taking an active interest. Why wouldn't they come out and have a general discussion of the problem? Well, in the summer of '51, comparable to what we're confronted with now, wage and price controls were an issue. And, of course, they'd been put on during the Korean War. Whether or not they should be extended was the issue. I personally was of the opinion that as long as there was plenty of merchandise, there wasn't any reason to have wage and price control if the free market could handle the problem. But there was a great desire by organized labor to keep them on, and a great desire by business to remove them.

So I gave a lot of thought as to just how we could arrange a forum to get labor and business together on it. I sent out an inquiry to labor and to business, asking them to answer a questionnaire, and got a fairly good response. So then I decided the thing to do was to hit this issue head on, have a public meeting, invite the press, invite labor, invite management, and in order to prevent it from being a hassle, not take questions from the floor, but have the questions written out in advance, and I would answer the questions and stay there as long as they wanted me to and give them the benefit of what I knew, not taking one side or the other too pointedly, but letting them know how I personally felt, that I was open for the facts and figures to come in.

We held a public forum that was attended by, oh, I'd say must have been a thousand people there. And labor was well-represented: the AFL-CIO executive director, Leo Dugan, and the AFL-CIO counsel, and other labor leaders, and the president of the rubber workers and his assistant were all in the high school auditorium. I recorded all of the questions and answers and tried to keep the personal feelings out of it and tried to tell people, "If you agree, fine. If you disagree, just don't try to out-applaud one another," and it was very, very successful. It brought out a lot of points, labor's position and my own. I was able to explain that our inventories were higher than ever of stable goods: our problem was going to be sales and not limitation of sales; our problem was not going to be wage and price controls. If the inventories were eliminated, we would need more production, wages would be there. I talked from the

[AYRES] businessman's point of view, cited some personal experiences in my own business and what the attitude of the Congress was as I witnessed it. As it turned out, the newspapers covered it very well. And I think for the first time, the labor fellows who had fought me so hard in the election figured, "Well, at least he comes back and faces the music, and gives us a chance to say what we believe, even though he disagrees with us," so there I came back and gave quite a report to the Congress of what my findings were in my district and, of course, later wage and price controls were removed.

MORRISSEY: Interesting.

AYRES: I don't say it was just because of my forum, but the position I had taken prevailed.

MORRISSEY: You talked often in these two interviews about the leading personalities of the last quarter century in American political history. Can you give me your impressions of some of these people . . . you told me how Robert Taft really got you started in politics. But beyond that, what kind of man was Taft as he appeared in your life, as you saw him in action?

AYRES: Well, Senator Taft was probably the most intellectual person, even including college professors that I had gotten close to, that I had ever met. In fact, he probably can be explained best by a comment from his wife, Martha Taft, who, at a meeting, was asked by one of the women during a question and answer period, why her husband couldn't be just a little more ordinary, that he might get elected president if he were--and Martha replied, "My dear friend. I want you to know that Martha Taft didn't marry an ordinary man," which was very true. He was not an ordinary man. I think probably the following he had was very, very dedicated, but he never expanded beyond that group of dedicated people or he could have been nominated president. I could never see Senator Taft as being one who could direct an organization. He was an excellent senator because a senator is a single operator within the confines of his senatorial duties, and Senator Taft was superb in that field. But when he got into a fight where he had to get a nomination and he had to get other elements pacified, that trait was not one of his strong points.

It was interesting after Senator Taft died, Carroll Reece promoted the Taft Memorial.

MORRISSEY: The memorial here on Capitol Hill?

AYRES: The one that's on Capitol Hill. And there again, we were speaking of my relationship with Rayburn. Carroll Reece came to me and said, "We're having a little trouble getting grounds approved for the Taft Memorial," and said, "You've been close to Rayburn. Can't you mention to him that this would be a great thing for you in Ohio, and how it's just going to take up a small piece of ground that isn't going to be used for anything ever anyway, except a park." So I said, "Yes." So Rayburn asked me, "Well, how big is this thing going to be?" I said, "You'll have to talk to Carroll about that, but I think it would really be a great thing for the Capitol, because here is 'Mr. Republican'. We don't have anything comparable to it." So, he agreed on the land. I don't think he ever agreed on what the height or anything else was going to be.

So, sometime after it was built and they had the carillon in there, which was quite noisy and quite penetrating, even to the Capitol, Rayburn supposedly said one day, "What the hell is that noise?" And they said, "Well, that's from the Taft Memorial." "Well, if I had known they were going to put that in there, I'd never have approved that for Reece and Ayres." [Laughter]. And, in retrospect, with all due respect to the great senator, compared to other things around the Capitol, it is a rather large memorial.

MORRISSEY: However, compared, say, to the Rayburn Building, I think it's very tasteful.

AYRES: Yes, yes, I do, too. Of course, the Rayburn Building, that's properly named. It really is the Rayburn Building because of the haphazard manner in which the contractor operated, just saying to Sam, "Be okay if we do this, Sam?" Sam was the building committee. "Yeah, go ahead, no problem." Anytime he needed more money, Sam could get it for him.

Of course, when they changed the front of the Capitol, they thought that was going to be a memorial for Rayburn when they put in the Sam Rayburn Room. But staffs were growing. The Rayburn Building is a very functional building as far as the offices are concerned, and it was needed. When I came to the Congress in '51, we had two not particularly large rooms to operate from, and the secretarial staff, while trying to work, was interrupted almost constantly either by constituents or people wanting to see the member. So to get their work out was very, very difficult. Whereas now, the way the Rayburn Building is set up, the receptionist can be there and it's all separate. The member can work in his office, the

[AYRES] secretarial staff has an office and the administrative assistant has an office, and they have sinks, so it's very, very efficient.

MORRISSEY: What's the story on the sinks?

AYRES: Well, the building has kitchens in it, has a refrigerator and kitchen cabinets, and having been in the plumbing and heating business, when I looked at it I thought, "Well, what in the world do they do here that they put these kitchen cabinets in for sinks and no sinks?" And I got hold of a copy of the blueprints and discovered that the sinks were specified, but Rayburn had said, "No, forget about the sinks. If we put those in we'll get some bad publicity." So I discovered the pipes were in the walls and after much hassle with Manny Celler and John McCormack, who had become chairman of the building committee, we finally got McClosky who had to go back and put all the sinks in. So now they all have sinks where they should have been in the first place. [Laughter.] Ironically, they tried to hide the deal by concealing the pipes in the wall. Normally, when you rough in for a sink you leave the pipes exposed so that it's no problem if you want to put a fixture in later. But so that no one would know about it they concealed the pipes; there wouldn't be any sinks in there if I hadn't found the blueprints and discovered that the pipes were in the wall. At least it was specified that they be there, and it turned out that they were. But it cost them thousands of dollars. McClosky really took it in the neck, which I was glad to see because he should have put them in in the first place, and to have to come back and tear out all those walls and solder in all the piping . . . of course, there's one thing they added that wasn't in the specifications. We made garbage disposals in my district, and I thought, "Now if we're going to put sinks in"--I had won that battle--"we should have garbage disposals because it's going to be awfully messy with the girls bringing their lunches and all . . . rodents and everything else in the place." So I had a difficult time explaining to Manny Celler and John McCormack what a disposal was because neither of them had ever lived in a house, they'd always lived in apartments--"Of course, you have one at the hotel, John, and you have one at your apartment, Manny. You just don't realize it. Whoever takes care of it just pushes a button and everything goes down the drain." And so they said, "Yeah, that makes sense." So they put the garbage disposals in and my home-town company bid on it and lost [laughter] after I had opened it up for them.

MORRISSEY: Any impressions of Eisenhower as president?

AYRES: Well, I think he was the right man at the right time for the country. I think as time goes on, with all the difficulties we had in the sixties, and now the difficulties we're having in the seventies, that they're going to look back maybe fifty years from now and say, "Eisenhower didn't know that much about politics, but he certainly got us out of Korea; he kept us out of Hungary; we didn't have too much trouble; the economy wasn't too bad, and people were pretty happy." He was a very, very steady administrator. He ran it like he ran the army. I was . . . well, not only thrilled with the president, but I suppose I was young enough at the time and had been a private in the army, so that when I sat down and talked with General Eisenhower, on a private basis on occasion, it was sort of hero-worship as far as I was concerned. But now in retrospect, he did a terrific job, and had he not gotten involved . . . he didn't personally, but had his staff, Sherm Adams, not slipped . . . of course, what Sherm did then is being done all the time in calling the agencies and if he just hadn't gotten tied up with Goldfine as a friend, and Goldfine turned out to be what he was . . . it was the only flaw in Eisenhower's set-up, and it must have hurt him to have that happen to Sherm Adams. But, other than that, what could anyone think of that they could point a finger at in Eisenhower's administration? When you compare Eisenhower and what happened in his administration to the way presidents have operated since, it was a very, very smooth operation.

MORRISSEY: We've talked quite a bit about Nixon, but I'd like to get on tape the story you told me this morning about the phone call he didn't want to make to California.

AYRES: Well, in 1962, early part of '62 or the latter part of '61--I can't say right now for sure--it was my turn to host the Chowder and Marching group which met every Wednesday evening, and Nixon was in town and called me and said that he was going to come to the Chowder and Marching meeting. Well, that meant . . . my gals got on the phone and called everybody and said, "Nixon's going to be at the meeting tonight," so we could get a good attendance, and everybody would want to see him, because he was a charter member of the organization. He'd just lost the presidency by a very close margin and had worked closely with all of the members from the time he was vice president. He came up to the office and he got there a little early and was chatting with me and he said, "You know, Bill, I'm going to ask the fellows tonight whether they think I ought to run for governor or not," and I knew very well he'd already made up his mind just from what he said, that this was just a

[AYRES] courtesy call, but I thought, "Well, it will be interesting to see what the fellows say." I had a feeling that most of them would probably agree with me, that he shouldn't run.

So we had the meeting and since I was the host, I called on Nixon to say a few words, explain what he'd been doing, what he intended to do. As usual, he was very precise, very articulate, had some interesting sidelights on the election--it's the first time he'd met with them--the Chowder and Marching group--since his defeat. So then the question came. He said, "I want to go around the room here. I want to ask each of you your opinion as to whether or not . . . I've been asked to run for governor of California, as to whether or not I should." So he went around the room, and we had some very interesting people there--Al Quie, who's now running for governor of Minnesota--looks like he'll probably be elected; Sam Devine of Ohio, Rogers Morton of Maryland; Al Cederberg of Michigan, Jim Battin of Montana, Bob Wilson of California, Mel Laird, and a number of others. We must have had about . . . Norris Cotton was there; Caleb Boggs was there; we probably had close to 15-16 members of the House and a couple from the Senate. And to a man, Nixon was advised that it would be ridiculous for him to run for governor because everybody would think he was only running for governor, not because he wanted to be governor, but because he wanted to stay alive politically, and their advice to him was to work hard for the '62 campaign, cement his relationships with the party, and be a candidate again in '64; that Kennedy was having his problems; he had the Bay of Pigs, his programs weren't all that popular; he had a lot of charisma himself but who knows what's going to happen? "That's your best route if you want to run again."

So, as we reached the end of the answers, I picked up the phone and started to hand it to Nixon and said, "Okay, Dick, you'd better call California if you came here tonight to get the expert opinion." And he never touched the phone. Just look at this picture. He's laughing very strongly and so is everyone else because they all realized that he wasn't about to make a phone call saying he wasn't going to run for governor. Later on he ran for governor and we all know the story.

MORRISSEY: You mentioned Goldwater earlier today.

AYRES: Well, of course, Barry Goldwater, I don't think ever thought that he would run for president back when I first got to know him so well during a conference back on the Landrum-Griffin bill. But he came along at a

[AYRES] time when there was a void outside of the liberal element, which was represented by [Nelson A.] Rockefeller, and Goldwater captured the imagination of the conservatives. Had there been another conservative running along with Goldwater, it would have been interesting to see who would have gotten the nomination. But there was a void there for the type of people who go to Republican conventions, who went to them at that time, and you could have anticipated that Rockefeller would get booed at that convention with the make-up of the group as it was.

But Barry Goldwater is a very, very able fellow and a very steady fellow. A true gentleman. He did have a little difficulty sometimes expressing himself. They tagged him on the social security and his way of explaining his stand. Barry Goldwater would have made a very good president and we wouldn't have been in Vietnam the way we were. We would have either been out of there by the summer of '65, or we would have just brought everybody home, and said, as [George] Aiken recommended, "We won. Goodbye." But that would have changed all of history if Barry Goldwater had been elected president and I am convinced that with his feeling toward sending ground troops into Asia, based on Eisenhower's comment, the escalation in Vietnam would never have occurred, it never would have escalated. Of course, the public was confused because Johnson promised the war wouldn't be escalated either.

MORRISSEY: You were for twenty years a colleague of Gerald Ford, and nobody ever thought American history would turn the way it did in the early seventies: Nixon resigning--Agnew first, then Nixon, Ford becoming vice-president, becoming president, becoming the candidate for reelection. What were your impressions of Jerry Ford during those twenty years?

AYRES: Gerald Ford is one of the hardest working members that I ever met. He was really a workhorse, and very, very thorough and very, very detail-minded, and always wanting to do what he felt would be the right thing. When he took on Charlie Halleck, I don't think it was so much that he wanted a position of leadership, although he was a very competitive fellow, but I really think he felt that Halleck had reached the point where he was not doing the job. If there was anything that Jerry Ford could not tolerate, it was someone who wasn't doing his job. And that became true when he was the minority leader--the committee chairmen who came onto the floor not prepared on their bills really upset him. I think his granting the pardon of Nixon . . . I don't think there's any doubt that Ford realized the political repercussions that would come from that. But he felt it was the right thing and it had